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ABSTRACT

This report focuses on the relations which have developed between black and white students in a new interracial middle school. In addition to describing these relations, it analyzes why and how they have developed. A review of the literature on desegregation and intergroup relations is used to set the context of the study. A description of the research methodology and criteria employed in the study is provided. Taken into consideration are teacher and student attitudes and aspects of the school's organization. Specific classroom activities and incidents are used in analyzing the development of interracial relationships. Findings are discussed and summarized and recommendations for improving student relations are made. A list of references is also included. (EB)

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Social Process and Peer Relations in a "Nearly Integrated" Middle School

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THE PROBLEM

There has been an extraordinary amount of research on school desegregation in recent years. The ERIC index alone lists over 2,500 studies on this topic written within the last decade.[1] However, as St. John's recent (1975) review of the literature shows, this research is far from conclusive about the results of desegregation on either children's academic achievement or their social development. St. John strongly suggests that a major reason for the inconclusiveness of the research is that researchers have tended to ignore the strong possibility that racial mixing per se is far less important than the specific conditions under which interracial contact occurs. Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1967) have both argued as St. John does that the nature of the contact situation vitally influences the effect desegregation will have on individuals. Yet, to a remarkable extent, research has focused on measuring the outcomes of desegregation without closely examining what the actual experience of attending a desegregated school is like.

The inconclusiveness of the research literature gives little encouragement to those who perceive school desegregation as an instant panacea able to raise black students' academic achievement and to improve intergroup relations and attitudes. But, consideration of the work of social scientists like Allport, Pettigrew, and St. John suggests that there was little reason to have expected

that the mere mixing of black and white students regardless of the circumstances would quickly have a wide range of desirable effects. Pettigrew (1967) calls this mere mixing of students desegregation and distinguishes it from integration, mixing under the specific circumstances which he argues are conducive to positive outcomes. Pettigrew (1967, 1973) argues that one important reason why much of the research suggests that desegregation has little positive impact is that the mixing of students has generally been carried out under circumstances which do not begin to approximate those necessary for true integration. One need only read Eddy's (1975) account of desegregation in a Florida high school to see how strongly it can actually serve to re-emphasize the traditional subordination of blacks in American society.

The study discussed in this report is very different from most desegregation studies in two vital respects. First, it is focused on a school that is rare in the extent to which it meets Pettigrew's criteria for true integration. Second, unlike most earlier work, it does not focus on testing hypothesized outcomes of interracial schooling. Rather, it explores a much neglected but crucial topic: the social relations and social processes which develop in an interracial school. More specifically, the report examines the relations which have developed between black and white students in a new interracial middle school. In addition to describing these relations, the report seeks to analyze why and how they have developed.

I chose to orient inquiry around the development of interracial interaction patterns for several reasons. First, research suggests that the development of positive social relationships between black and white students may help to account for the academic gains of black students in some interracial schools. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1967). Katz's (1964) work clearly suggests both that positive intergroup relations may facilitate black achievement in a desegregated setting while negative relations may undermine it. One might expect the same to be true for whites, especially in a school with a substantial black population. Second, research makes it clear that attitude change often follows rather than preceeds behavior change (Bem, 1972; Festinger, 1957; Schofield, 1972). Thus, if students can be induced to begin to act neutrally or positively towards each other they may experience some consequent positive change in their attitudes. Third, Jencks et al (1972) as well as others have suggested that more attention should be paid to structuring schools so that they are reasonably pleasurable environments for students. This viewpoint emphasizes that in addition to being agencies which prepare students for future roles schools are also the environments in which many people spend nearly half of their waking hours for a

significant proportion of their lives. This line of argument suggests that even if positive or negative interracial experiences do not cause generalized change in interracial behaviors and attitudes outside the school situation, positive interracial relationships within the school setting may be of some value.

This report is divided into several parts. Following this brief introductory statement is a review of the literature on desegregation and intergroup relations which helps to set the context for the study and which shows why intensive analysis of the social processes occurring in specific interracial schools is a much needed line of research. Next is a section which describes the school in which the study was conducted and outlines the methods employed in data gathering and analysis. Then come several sections which discuss the findings of the study. Finally, the report ends with a section outlining its conclusions and the recommendations based on those conclusions.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Recently, I completed a comprehensive review of the literature on the relation between school desegregation and intergroup relations which will be published shortly as a book chapter (Schofield, in press). A copy of this manuscript has been enclosed with the project report. Rather than inserting the entire rather lengthy chapter here as part of the project report, I would like to highlight certain aspects of the review which taken together argue strongly for the type of research presented in this report.

One theme which runs strongly through all recent reviews of the literature on the effect of school desegregation on intergroup relations is concern about the utter inconclusiveness of the research taken as a whole (Amir, 1969, 1976; Carithers, 1970; Cohen, 1975). For example, St. John's (1975) review of the literature from 1937 through 1973 on school desegregation and interracial attitudes concludes that the literature's most striking feature is the inconsistency of its findings. Many studies suggest that desegregation tends to lead to more positive interracial attitudes (Gardner, Wright, Sister Rita Dee, 1970; Jansen & Gallagher, 1966; Mann, 1959; Singer, 1966; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1967). Others suggest precisely the opposite (Barber, 1968; Dentler & Elkins, 1967; Taylor, 1967). Still others suggest that desegregation has a positive effect on the

attitudes of whites and a negative effect on the attitudes of blacks (McWhirt, 1967) or visa-versa (Crooks, 1970; Kurokawa, 1971; Webster, 1961). Finally, some like Lombardi (1962) or Trubowitz (1969) suggest no effect at all.

As St. John's (1975) analysis suggests, the findings on the relation between desegregation and interracial behavior are as contradictory and confusing as those on desegregation and intergroup attitudes. Several studies using sociometric techniques or other methods to assess interracial behavior have concluded that the children in desegregated schools become less accepting over time of members of other groups (Gerard & Miller, 1975; Shaw, 1973). However, other studies have come to somewhat different conclusions. For example, Yarrow, Campbell and Yarrow (1958) found that both black and white children who had attended an interracial summer camp were less likely to choose white cabin mates at the end of the two week experience, suggesting that desegregated experience can decrease whites' tendencies to in-group choice. Also, Schofield (1975) found that after one year of mandatory desegregation black elementary students were more likely to place themselves with an integrated group in a picture game than were their still segregated counterparts. Finally, some studies suggest neither an increase nor a decrease in interracial interaction over time in desegregated settings (Aronson & Mobel, 1966; Silverman & Shaw, 1973).

The only finding which emerges consistently from sociometric and observational studies in desegregated schools is that students interact much more with others of their own group than would be expected if race were not an important grouping criterion (Criswell, 1939; Gerard & Miller, 1975; Green & Gerard, 1976; Jansen & Gallagher, 1966; Moreno, 1934; Shaw, 1973; Schofield & Sagar, 1977a, 1977b). In some schools the resegregation seems almost total. Cusick and Ayling (1973) report that they were unable to talk with a racially mixed group over lunch at a high school because the informal pattern of segregated black and white tables was so strong that students were unwilling to break it. In other schools the resegregation is less complete, but still very marked. For example, Silverman and Shaw (1973) found that interracial interactions ranged from a low of .67% of all interactions observed to a high of 10.3% in three schools which were from 30 to 50 percent black.

Contact Theory and Desegregation: The Need for Theory Based Research

Cohen (1975) and St. John (1975) both argue convincingly that the lack of theoretical perspective in desegregation research is a major contributing factor to the inconclusiveness of the literature taken as a whole. Typically, researchers have studied a particular example of desegregation and looked

for changes in students' attitudes or behaviors which could be attributed to their interracial experience. However, because they bring no theoretical framework which would suggest what characteristics of the desegregated setting might relate to those changes, researchers pay little attention to what the desegregated setting is actually like. Because interracial schools differ so dramatically on so many variables, contradictory outcomes are found. Without a theoretical perspective, one has little idea of what patterns to look for and confusion abounds.

The only really widely shared theoretical perspective on desegregation and intergroup relations is that suggested by Allport's (1954) contact theory. Allport's basic thesis is relatively straightforward. He argues that intergroup contact may reinforce previously held stereotypes and increase intergroup hostility unless the contact situation is structured in a way which provides equal status for minority and majority group members and provides strong institutional support for positive relations. Allport also stresses the necessity of cooperative interaction aimed towards the achievement of shared goals. According to Allport, unless these conditions are met improvement in intergroup relations is unlikely to result.

As previously noted, Pettigrew (1967) has argued that it is a mistake to use one word, desegregation, to apply to all types of interracial schooling. He has drawn a distinction between

what he calls merely desegregated schools and genuinely integrated schools. Pettigrew et al (1973, pp. 92-93) write: "Desegregation is achieved by simply ending segregation and bringing blacks and whites together; it implies nothing about the quality of interracial interaction." Integration, on the other hand, is achieved only when Allport's conditions for fostering positive intergroup contact have been met. Pettigrew (1973) argues, for example, that Allport's equal status criterion requires that the integrated school provide equal access to sources of social status as well as to physical facilities and materials. Hence, he contends that an integrated school's staff must be interracial at all levels and that positions which give students formal or informal status, such as student council membership, must not be monopolized by either group. Pettigrew also sees strict ability grouping on the basis of test scores as incompatible with the equal status criterion when it leads to heavily resegregated classrooms with differential status. In addition, he stresses the vital importance of the attitudes of school authorities, such as the principal, arguing that positive attitudes about desegregation are crucial to creating the supportive atmosphere which Allport hypothesized was necessary for improved intergroup relations.

Although contact theory is routinely invoked in reports on desegregation research, it has, in actuality, had a remarkably small impact on the design of that research. Unfortunately,

while contact theory is often used to explain the results of studies which find that interracial contact has led to increased friction or to no change, it has rarely been used to structure studies of desegregation's effects. The very few studies which have taken contact theory really seriously have found generally promising results - that is, changes in interracial attitudes or behavior have appeared to be related to the conditions of desegregation much as Allport (1954) has suggested (Cook, 1969, 1971; Foley, 1976; Lachat, 1972). For example, Lachat (1972) studied racial attitudes in an all white, an integrated, and a desegregated high school. Although there was a considerable amount of voluntary segregation in informal social activities in the integrated school as well as the desegregated one, the white students were almost twice as likely to hold positive attitudes towards blacks in the former school as in the latter (71% vs. 37%). However, since studies which test contact theory's predictions about positive change are so few and far between it is difficult to assess how adequately this theory has isolated the variables which effect the outcomes of interracial contact.

One reason that contact theory has not been utilized frequently in structuring studies of interracial schooling is that much remains to be done in working out conceptually the way in which the rather general ideas employed by the theory apply to and operate in the school situation. The need for systematic

conceptual work on the development and refinement of contact theory can be illustrated by discussion of the very varied ways in which the concept of equal status within the contact situation has been conceptualized. Some social scientists have considered the equal status criterion met when members of both groups have equal access to the same institution. For example, Webster (1961) considered the equal status condition as met when blacks and whites were assigned to attend the same school. Webster discusses equal access to the school but says nothing about the racial composition of the school's staff or about internal arrangements such as tracking. Hence, Pettigrew's position that contact theory requires equal access to positions conferring both formal and informal status for the staff and the clients of an institution goes well beyond the requirements for "equal status" as they are operationalized in many contact studies like Webster's.

St. John (1975), Cohen (1975) and Armor (1972) have gone a step further and emphasized the difficulty of actually achieving equal status within the contact situation when students bring with them very different backgrounds. St. John (1975, p.98) writes, "Black and white children may be unequally prepared to be successful students or may be accorded unequal status in the peer group because of differential family background." After studying interaction between black and white students, Cohen (1975, p. 294) contends "the inference may be drawn that

even though blacks and whites might be brought together in a desegregated school in an 'equal status' manner, it is still quite possible for the racial difference to act as a strong status differential triggering expectations for whites to do better... . If this occurs in the school situation, then the racial stereotypes which contribute to these expectations are only reinforced and confirmed by the interracial interaction." In these statements the emphasis is on the way that various characteristics which the group members bring with them influence the development of informal status and consequent intergroup relations. Finally, in recent years it has even been argued that equal status is not a necessary precondition to improved intergroup relations (Amir, 1976; Riordan, 1975). Hence, it is clear that considerable thought needs to be given to the way in which the variables isolated by contact theory should be defined and to how these variables may operate to bring about improvements in intergroup relations.

The Need for Attention to the Specific Conditions of Racial Mixing

Although contact theory should have sensitized researchers to the importance of the precise conditions of interracial contact, research has focused almost exclusively on measuring the outcomes of desegregation without closely examining what the actual

experience of attending the desegregated schools studied is like. Researchers often tip their hats to contact theory in the introductory passages of a report but then fail entirely to give information on topics which the theory suggests are vital to predicting the likely outcomes of the interracial experience. Webster's (1961) study is fairly typical in this regard. Webster mentions contact theory in the first paragraph of his study. In discussing his results he states that the criteria specified by contact theory as conducive to positive change were met. However, the extent to which these criteria were actually met in the study is extremely unclear. For example, the only information Webster (1961) gives about the authorities' stand on desegregation is that the school board ordered the change in district boundaries which resulted in the desegregation because of overcrowding and socioeconomic status differentials between schools. There is no specific information on the attitudes of others, such as principals or teachers, who could reasonably be argued to be authorities more important than the school board in the eyes of the desegregated junior high school students. In addition, no information is given on the racial composition of the school's staff. Webster's study has been cited to provide a specific example of research which takes a contact theory perspective without supplying data which the perspective would suggest is important. However, many others do precisely the same thing.

As I see it, one of the major reasons for the apparent inconsistency of the research on desegregation is that researchers have studied vastly different situations without differentiating between them and without even supplying the basic descriptive information which would allow others to do so. The problem is, as Cohen (1975, p. 274) points out, that "desegregation is a political-legal concept, used in widely differing ways by different courts. And when researchers attempt to locate settings in which to study desegregation, they too differ as to what constitutes desegregation." Schools which are considered desegregated in one study might well be considered segregated in another. For example, Singer (1966) classifies a school which is 80% black as segregated whereas Porter (1971) calls a classroom which is 70% black desegregated. Useem (1971) analyzes racial attitudes in a "token desegregated school" which is over 95% white. Kurokawa (1971) compares a "white" school to a "mixed school." Although he does not give the precise proportion of whites, blacks, and Japanese Americans at these two schools, he obtained one-third of his minority group sample from the "white" school which clearly means that it was not entirely white.

Research has quite clearly shown that the ratio of black to white in a desegregated situation is related to intergroup attitudes. (Dentler & Elkins, 1967; McPartland, 1968; St. John & Lewis,

1975; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1967). There is also some evidence that interracial friendship patterns are influenced by whether black students attend a desegregated neighborhood school or a more distant desegregated school (St. John & Lewis, 1975; Willie, 1973). Hence, it seems likely that the wide variation in the particular racial mix of the schools studied and in the schools' community settings contributes substantially to making it difficult to draw any overall conclusions about the impact of desegregation on interracial attitudes and behavior.

Even if the instances of desegregation studied were similar with respect to the ratio of blacks to whites in the schools and the surrounding communities, there would probably still be such substantial differences between the situations that they might be expected to produce widely varying results. For example, some schools distribute black and white students throughout their classes in proportions roughly similar to their proportions in the school (Schofield, 1976). Others clearly resegregate black and white students within the school building (National Institute of Education, 1975). It is reasonable to speculate that these two types of schools could have entirely different effects on the intergroup attitudes of their students with the resegregated school reinforcing prejudiced attitudes and tendencies toward in-group choice. Indeed, a study by Koslin, Amarel, and Ames (1969) found less racial polarization

in classrooms which closely reflected the racial balance of the school they were in than in classrooms where the racial composition differed from that of the school. Interestingly, in spite of the fact that almost a decade has passed since Cook (1969) drew attention to the importance of the contact situation's acquaintance potential, extremely few published research reports give even crude information on this topic. Cohen's (1975) review of the literature on school desegregation and intergroup relations notes that four-fifths of the studies done between 1968 and 1974 failed to report on whether there was ever any interracial contact in the classrooms of the schools in which the research was conducted.

In summary, research to date has given a woefully inadequate amount of attention to describing even the most basic characteristics of the desegregated schools being studied. Until researchers gain a better theoretical grasp of the processes occurring in desegregated schools and an appreciation of the aspects of the school environment which influence these processes the literature on school desegregation and intergroup relations is likely to continue to be fragmented and inconclusive.

The Need for Work on Classroom Processes in Interracial Schools

Typically researchers studying desegregated schools have tried to assess the effects of desegregation without

simultaneously exploring the social processes which might account for these effects. (National Institute of Education, 1974; St. John, 1975). The lack of attention given in the desegregation literature to classroom social process is striking. This point is well illustrated by the fact that in his discussion of "the dynamics of the interracial classroom," Pettigrew (1967) cites just three major studies or groups of studies. Two of these, the Equality of Educational Opportunity survey (Coleman, et al, 1966) and Racial Isolation in the Public Schools (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1967), were, as Pettigrew (1967, p. 285) notes, broad-gauged surveys which, though they can describe and statistically relate variables, "can only hint at the basic... processes at work." The third group of studies, reported in Katz (1964), is much more useful in understanding the dynamics of interracial interaction since biracial groups were observed in a variety of experimental situations. Katz's work suggests that the academic performance of black Americans in biracial situations may be influenced by four factors: lowered probability of success, social threat, failure threat, and a social facilitation effect.[2] However, the participants in Katz's experiments were primarily college age or older. Hence, it is unclear how well his findings would apply to a schoolroom situation with younger students. As a matter of fact, later work by Katz and his colleagues (Katz, Henchy,

& Allen, 1968) suggests that the social facilitation effect observed in the earlier experiments did not operate for black children in a ghetto elementary school.

In the decade since Pettigrew's (1967) discussion of social process in desegregated classrooms there has been some additional work oriented towards increasing our understanding of these processes. Cohen, Lockheed, and Lohman's (1976) experimental work based on status expectation theory is an excellent example. Willie's (1973) ethnographic study of the assimilation of new children, both black and white, into desegregated classrooms is another. With rare exceptions such as these, little progress has been made in illuminating how black and white children in desegregated schools react to each other, what factors affect this process, and what mechanisms the children develop for handling the often new and threatening social environment in which they find themselves.

The Need for Observational Research on Intergroup Behavior

In addition to concentrating on outcomes rather than on the processes which account for these outcomes, the literature on desegregation and intergroup relations has focused heavily on interracial attitudes rather than interracial behavior. Also, research which purports to study interracial behavior

rarely does so through direct observation of that behavior.

St. John's (1975) review of the work on desegregation and intergroup behavior lists 19 studies many of which are routinely cited in similar discussions of the literature (Carithers, 1970; Cohen, 1975; Pettigrew, 1969). Rather remarkably, only one of these studies involved actual observation of intergroup behavior in a desegregated school.[3] The large majority use variants on traditional sociometric techniques (Moreno, 1934) which involve asking people to report whom they would chose to interact with in various situations. Similarly, sociometric or other non-observational methods predominate in the work bearing on interracial interaction produced since 1973 (e.g. Gerard & Miller, 1975; Green & Gerard, 1976; Schofield, 1975). As a matter of fact, examination of the studies from 1937 - 1973 catalogued by St. John (1975) and a search of Psychology Abstracts, Sociology Abstracts, and the ERIC indices from 1974 to 1976 revealed only three studies which employed even reasonably systematic observation to assess changes in students' interracial behavior (Aronson & Nobel, 1966; Silverman & Shaw, 1973; Willie, 1973).

The widespread use of sociometric measures of intergroup behavior to the virtual exclusion of other methods is unfortunate for a number of reasons. Almost all the data suggesting that choices on sociometric tests reflect actual behavior choices

have been gathered in white classrooms (Biehler, 1954; Bonney & Powell, 1953; Byrd, 1951). Also, sociometric measures may well be quite open to distortion due to evaluation apprehension (Rosenberg, 1969). It seems reasonable to expect that the responses of students in desegregated schools to sociometric tasks and other self-report measures might be seriously influenced by their perceptions of what school authorities believe is the proper relationship between blacks and whites. Hence, sociometric measures may well be notably less reliable indicators of actual behavior in desegregated schools than in segregated ones.

Even if sociometric choices were shown to be strongly associated with actual behavior patterns in desegregated classrooms there is still some question of how appropriate these techniques are for assessing the impact of desegregation on intergroup behavior. Typically, sociometric measures require the child to give the names of a very small number of other children who are the most preferred companions for various types of activities. Although such measures allow assessment of the child's closest friends or most preferred partners, they are generally very insensitive to changes in patterns of social interaction which do not involve the development of especially strong relationships. Cohen (1975, p. 273) has written: "The mechanism of desegregation is not intended to create universal love and brotherhood. The goal of the

desegregation process is a reasonable degree of social integration and a lack of overt conflict whereby blacks and whites, given an objective important to both, can trust each other and listen to each other sufficiently well to complete the task at hand, whether it be a vocational task, an educational task, or a political task." To the extent that one accepts Cohen's argument, sociometric techniques seem to measure an outcome which though desirable is not of the highest priority. Obviously, this is not a criticism of the sociometric technique per se. Rather, it is a suggestion that sociometric techniques tap a specific type of behavior which from the point of view of social policy is less crucial than many other types of intergroup behavior.

In addition, it should be noted that the most frequently used sociometric techniques tend to tap behaviors which are relatively unlikely to change over short periods of time. For example, it seems reasonable to expect that a child who initially avoids playing with members of an outgroup would become willing to play with outgroup members if a conducive situation should arise long before he or she would ever select an outgroup member as a playmate when allowed to single out a few special students. In light of this fact, it is especially unfortunate that studies

of school desegregation typically span just the first year of the desegregation process (St. John, 1975). Also, the majority of desegregation studies have been conducted in schools where desegregation stems from the tranfer of children from one school to another rather than from racially integrated housing patterns. There is evidence suggesting that new children in a school, regardless of their race, do not immediately become fully integrated into the peer network (St. John & Lewis, 1975; Willie, 1973). Hence, it seems unrealistic to expect that sociometric techniques would indicate marked changes in interracial behavior in the space of a year or less even if the school came close to meeting Allport's (1954) criteria.

Due to both ethical and practical constraints recent studies using sociometric peer nomination techniques almost invariably ask children to name those they want to interact with most but avoid asking for the names of those with whom they are least likely to want to interact (Gerard & Miller, 1975; Schofield, in press). The same tendency to avoid strong negative categories is also clear in sociometric rating studies in which children are asked to rate others on a continuum (Schofield & McGivern, 1977a; St John & Lewis, 1975). The work of Patchen, Davidson, Hofmann, and Brown (1977) suggests that the best predictors of positive interracial behavior are not

the same factors which best predict negative behavior. Hence, work which focuses exclusively on factors influencing positive behavior may be of little help to theorists or practitioners who are trying to understand the origins of negative behaviors and mechanisms for reducing such behaviors.

Because of the serious problems associated with using sociometric techniques to measure desegregation's impact on intergroup behavior, direct measurement of the behavior itself seems much preferable. Of course, it is possible that, like sociometric measures, behavior may be influenced by evaluation apprehension. However, in recent years investigators have found ways to record interracial behavior that appear to be quite non-reactive (Shaw, 1973; Silverman & Shaw, 1973; Schofield & Sagar, 1977a). Also, behavioral measures can easily be used to measure things like seating patterns which may show either positive or negative change well before the more intense relationships which most sociometric techniques are designed to tap. In addition, they can be used when desired to study the same sort of choice behavior that sociometric techniques are designed to measure. For example, Schofield (1976) reports the use of a game run by teachers as part of ordinary classroom activity which was developed specifically to allow direct observation of student friendship choices.

Given the numerous problems with sociometric and other self-report measures and the advantages of behavioral measures, the question of why sociometric techniques have been so much more widely used arises. It would seem that practical considerations most probably account for the widely shown preference for sociometric techniques. Sociometric questionnaires can be administered relatively quickly and easily to large numbers of students. In addition, they pose little threat to teachers or administrators although they may pose more of a threat to students than relatively unobtrusive behavioral measures. On the other hand, behavioral observations in the classroom require the presence of the researcher while the teacher is actually teaching and hence are potentially more threatening. Also, although there are numerous widely known and used observational systems which focus on teacher-student interaction there are very few designed to assess student-student interaction (Simon & Boyer, 1968, 1974). So, at the present time the researcher interested in analyzing peer interactions in desegregated schools is likely to have to choose between two very time consuming alternatives - the development of a systematic coding system or sufficiently great involvement in interracial classrooms to make qualitative analysis of the behavior patterns which occur there feasible.

Concluding Remarks

I have outlined above four important problems with research on desegregation and intergroup relations. First, the research has been largely atheoretical or minimally influenced by theoretical perspectives. Second, it has essentially ignored the wide and often important variations in the specific social situations which children encounter in interracial schools. Third, it has focused on assessing "the effect" of desegregation tending to assume a unitary effect and to ignore the processes responsible for these effects. Finally, it largely eschewed the direct observation of interracial behavior.

The project reported in the following sections of this paper was designed to begin to fill the gaps caused by the problems with past research outlined above. The approach taken here is clearly not the only one consistent with the needs of the research area at the moment. However, it is very appropriate one given the present state of the literature on school desegregation and intergroup relations. I have rooted the project quite firmly in contact theory. My purpose is not to attempt to prove or disprove contact theory's contentions. Rather, I have used contact theory as a frame of reference to sensitize me to aspects of the school experience which are likely to be important to the development of intergroup relations. In addition to using contact theory to suggest

potentially important areas for detailed analysis, I have tried to use the data gathered in the study to suggest issues which contact theory needs to confront more fully or to analyze more carefully.

The importance of exploring the social processes occurring in interracial schools, the need for closer attention to the specific conditions under which contact takes place, and the advantages of focusing on interracial behavior all combined to suggest that intensive observation of one interracial school could make a valuable contribution to our present understanding of how and why interracial schooling influences intergroup relations. Obviously, the results of a study conducted in just one such school cannot blithely be generalized to all or even most racially mixed schools. However, given our very rudimentary understanding of the forces influencing the development of social relations between black and white students, such a study can raise much needed issues and begin to suggest where some of the answers may lie.

METHODOLOGY

The Research Site: Wexler Middle School[4]

The study presented in this report was conducted at Wexler Middle School. Wexler is located in a large industrial northeastern city which will be called Waterford. The city contains a rich variety of ethnic groups including substantial numbers of Italians and Irish as well as sizeable communities of Polish, Slovaks, and other eastern European groups. Just over 20% of the city's population is black. A large majority of the black population lives in heavily segregated and economically depressed neighborhoods. But there is a black middle class which has a noticeable impact on local politics. Waterford experienced some race related civil disorders during the 1960's. But these were not severe compared to those in cities like Los Angeles, Detroit, or Boston.

Forty-two percent of the students in Waterford's schools are black. However, over one-half of the city's schools have enrollments which are extremely heavily segregated (over 90% black or white). Waterford has been under some pressure from the state government to desegregate since the late 1960's. Nevertheless, to date the city has not come up with a plan acceptable to the state. Although the racially mixed Board of Education has strongly emphasized its commitment to desegregation

in numerous public pronouncements, it has also consistently been opposed to any desegregation plan which would involve large scale bussing of students. Given the residential patterns in the city, it is extremely difficult to see how thorough going desegregation can be achieved without considerable bussing.

Although the Board of Education has so far failed to produce a plan that will lead to far-reaching desegregation, it has made a number of decisions in the last decade which have at least kept the city's schools from becoming even more heavily segregated than they are. In fact, the percentage of black students in essentially all black schools has decreased modestly in the 1970's from 56% at the beginning of the decade to 46% in 1974 (Center for National Policy Review, 1977). First, the Board has consciously sought to build its new schools in locations which can easily serve both black and white children. Second, in the 1960's an open enrollment policy was instituted which let students voluntarily transfer to another school if that school was not operating at full capacity. Fewer than one percent of the black students in Waterford have been involved in this program. Nonetheless, it did lead to at least token desegregation of a number of previously all white schools.[5] Finally, in 1974 the Board decided that Wexler, then still in the planning stages, would have a racially balanced student body obtained through open enrollment of students graduating from

24 elementary schools in the northern third of the city. Although the opening of this school obviously could do relatively little to relieve the pervasive segregation in the city's school system, it was hoped that it could serve as a model of high quality integrated education.

The Board decided that students would be admitted to Wexler on a first come first serve basis within predetermined quotas set to achieve racial and sexual balance. The goal was to obtain a student body approximately 58% white and 42% black which would exactly mirror the black/white ratio in the entire school system. Black and white community groups both asked the Board to change the quotas to increase the percentage of students from their own group attending the school.[6] However, the Board stuck with its initial plan.

Once the quota issue was settled, the Board accepted applications to Wexler. Blacks applied to Wexler at a much more rapid rate than whites. Three-fourths of the applications received during the first three days were from blacks. On the first day there were 433 black applicants and 74 whites, on the second 226 blacks and 43 whites and on the third day approximately 100 from each group. The black community's enthusiasm for the school was vividly demonstrated by the fact that by noon of the first day on which applications were accepted the slots for eighth grade black girls were entirely filled.

When the school opened its doors the student body was approximately 47% white and 53% black. The deviation from the Board's initial goal reflected the fact that many whites were dubious about enrolling their children in a racially mixed school.

Few people were surprised by the large numbers of applications from black students. Historically, a high proportion of the black population has favored desegregation although much of Waterford's black population is not enthusiastic about bussing. Also, and perhaps more importantly, the black schools in Waterford tend to be old and relatively poorly staffed and equipped. Although Wexler did not attract as many whites as it had hoped to, it came relatively close to meeting its goal. The question arises of how Wexler was able to attract these white students. Certainly the fact that Waterford's predominately white school board has been unable to come up with a desegregation plan in spite of state pressures for one over the course of almost a decade suggests that historically there has been little popular support in the white community for desegregated schooling. Interviews with students and parents suggest that two major factors motivated white students to attend Wexler: 1) its unusually strong academic program and, 2) its outstanding physical facilities and equipment which make possible an extraordinarily broad array of non-academic programs.

Wexler is the home for the northern part of the city of a prestigious eighth grade scholar's program, a special accelerated program for students with measured IQ's exceeding 130. When arguing in favor of locating this program at Wexler, the superintendent of schools pointed out specifically that this would help the school to attract students. The school also has an experimental enrichment program for talented sixth and seventh graders. In addition, the school will offer more team teaching and individualization of instruction than is available in most other Waterford middle schools.

Wexler cost over 12 million dollars to build and its high cost is reflected in its unusually fine physical facilities. For example, the school has athletic facilities including a swimming pool and tennis courts comparable to or better than most high schools in the city let alone the junior high schools. Also illustrative of the school's unusual facilities and programs is its media center - three rooms including a production studio and a control room in which students use regular T.V. cameras, lights, and sound equipment to produce programs for transmission throughout the school on an internal closed circuit system.

In addition to being lavish, the physical facilities are very well suited to administrative structure of the school as well as to its curriculum. Administratively the school is

divided by grade level into three "schools within a school." Each grade is called a house and each house is headed by a dean. The deans are responsible to the principal. However, they have a considerable degree of autonomy.

The houses are separated physically from one another. By way of illustration, although the sixth and eighth grade houses share the second floor of the building, they are separated by a large library and the media area which occupy the center of the second floor. Within each house faculty and students are divided in teams. Each faculty team consists of five teachers. These teachers, each of whom is responsible for one subject area, English, Social Studies, Math, Reading, or Science, teach a team of approximately 125 students. Students on each team, divided into classes of approximately 25, rotate through the classrooms of their five academic teachers. They generally stay with other students from their team, but not necessarily with students in their particular class, for non-academic courses such as gym, art, or home economics. Within the houses, the classrooms of each team are grouped together. These classroors are separated by partitions which can be removed when teachers desire to work with the team as a group rather than with individual classes.

In the spring of 1976, less than a year after Wexler first opened, the Waterford Board of Education made a decision which

may have far reaching consequences for the school. The open enrollment policy was replaced by a plan in which children graduating from 11 elementary schools were required to attend Wexler. Other children were permitted to enroll only under a few special circumstances such as having a sibling who had entered the school under the earlier open enrollment plan.

This policy change had two very noticeable effects. First, the number of children in Wexler's sixth grade increased from approximately 450 to just over 500. Second, the new sixth grade was over two-thirds black rather than just half black. The change in enrollment policy may have important implications for the school's future. It has clearly created quite a new social situation in the classrooms of the affected grades. Also, there is concern on the part of many that the school will come to be perceived as a black school rather than an integrated school and that whites will find ways to avoid it. At this time, it is still too early to assess the impact of the new enrollment on the school. However, Wexler's future as an integrated school seems much more problematic under the new policy than it did under the old.

Integration or Desegregation?

This section of the report will briefly analyze the extent to which Wexler meets the criteria that Pettigrew (1967) says are crucial to creating an environment which can provide a positive interracial experience for all students. Somewhat more detailed consideration of this issue appears in later segments of the report. Given the pervasive prejudice in our society as well as the clear disparity between blacks and whites in

social and economic power, one might well question whether it is currently possible to structure a public school so that it even begins to approach Pettigrew's ideal. The amply documented and widespread tendency for resegregation within interracial schools lends support to those who argue that real integration is a chimera unlikely to be achieved in today's society.[7] If true integration is not realistically possible perhaps attitudes towards the importance of interracial schooling will have to be rethought. Harvard's influential Derrick Bell (1975) has recently suggested that if desegregated schools are unwilling to change policies and practices which are not conducive to black childrens'

growth, black parents would do well to consider other alternatives including "separate but equal" black schools.

Equal status contact.

The first criteria which Pettigrew (1967) says is necessary for true integration is equal status within the contact situation. Wexler has made unusually strong efforts to provide equal formal status for blacks and whites. However, as will become clear, there are many ways in which the disparities between blacks and whites in the society at large undermine the school's efforts.

Typically, school desegregation involves sending black children to previously all white schools. This immediately puts black children at a disadvantage because they are outsiders in the community surrounding the school and newcomers in an already established social system. Wexler differs from this

situation in two important ways. First, the school is not located on traditionally white or black territory. It sits on a large tract of land which is bounded by a factory with a racially mixed work force, a government building, a public park, and small stores which are on the periphery of one of the most desegregated shopping areas in the city. Beyond these immediate racially neutral boundaries, a white residential area fans out to the west and a black area spreads to the east.

situation

One of the reasons the Board of Education purchased this particular tract of land was its easy access from both black and white residential areas.[8]

In addition to being located on a piece of land which is not clearly white or black territory, the school was interracial from the day it opened its doors in September, 1975. Hence, children of one group were not confronted with having to make a place for themselves in an already functioning social system dominated by the other group and permeated with its attitudes and values. This is a very important factor in making equal status relations between the groups possible. For example, in some previously all white schools, black students have had to resort to litigation to end the use of traditional but racially insulting school songs or cheers (Bell, 1975). The process through which the Wexler's mascot was adopted illustrates the equal footing of black and white students in the creation of symbols to represent their school. First, all students were informed by the principal that a school mascot would be chosen. Any interested students were asked to submit a drawing and a name. A biracial committee of administrators chose three finalists from all submissions and every student could vote for his or her favorite. The winning entry was submitted by a black girl.

The faculty is approximately 25 % black. Mr. Reuben, the principal, tried to get a higher proportion of black faculty for the school so that the black/white ratio of the faculty would be closer to that of the student body. However, the Board of Education was unwilling to allow this since the proportion of black faculty in the entire school system is markedly below 25% and they did not want to rob other schools of too high a proportion of their black faculty. It must be noted that the black faculty are not evenly distributed throughout the different types of teaching positions. For example, about 15% of the sixth grade academic faculty are black compared to almost one-half of the faculty for certain vocationally oriented classes. This staffing pattern reflects the pool of teachers available within the school system. The school also has ten teachers' aides all of whom are black. Although these aides are clearly subordinate to the teachers they do notably increase the number of blacks involved in the instructional process since most of the aides' time is spent tutoring students on an individual or small group basis in the regular classrooms. A specific count of blacks and whites within categories like maintenance personnel or secretaries has not been made. Most of these job categories do appear however to be approximately equally likely to be filled by blacks and whites.

The near equal representation of blacks and whites in the student body is clearly conducive to the development of equal status for black and white students. If either group forms too large a majority it becomes much easier for that group to organize itself to gain a monopoly or near monopoly on desirable positions.

However, the mere fact that the student body is about half black does not guarantee that formal and informal status will be equally distributed. For example, in many desegregated schools students are put into academic tracks on the basis of standardized test scores or grades. Black students frequently are disproportionately represented in the slower tracks. A school which is 50% black but which has most of its black students in the slow tracks could hardly be said to provide all students equal status.

At Wexler, the formal organization of students into teams and classroom groups generally avoids making such distinctions between groups of students. For example, in the sixth grade students were assigned to teams essentially randomly with respect to their achievement test scores. Then within each team, students were initially grouped into classes in a way which would guarantee moderate heterogeneity, i.e., students with the lowest scores were grouped with students with average scores to form

a class. Students with the next lowest scores were grouped with others which were slightly above average. Hence, the range of scores within each class was restricted somewhat but there was no obvious "slow" or "fast" class.

In March 1970, one team of sixth grade teachers decided to regroup their classes in order to reduce the range of abilities. They felt that the adoption of a tracking system would make it easier for them to teach more effectively. However, Dean Kent refused to let them go ahead with their plan primarily because it would have tended to resegregate students within the team. Another similar reorganization plan on the part of a different sixth grade team was also dropped about this time due to the Dean's opposition. This plan would have resulted in two "slow" classes, one "fast" class, and two "intermediate" classes. The "slow" classes would have been about 90% black and the "fast" class about 80% white.

Although Wexler does not use a tracking system, there are two special highly segregated groups of students in the school. First, over 80% of the students in the eighth grade scholars program are white. This is so in spite of the fact that somewhat lower cut off points on standardized tests were used for black students than for white.[9] Second, about 80% of the children in educable mentally retarded (EMR) classes are black.

The emergence of academic reorganization plans which would have done much to resegregate students and the racial composition of the scholars and EIP groups highlight a serious impediment to the achievement of the sort of truly integrated experience Pettigrew speaks of. Black children entering interracial schools are often noticeably behind their white peers in basic academic skills (Coleman et al, 1966). Tracking, a very common academic practice, is thus likely to lead to resegregation. The alternative, heterogeneous classroom groupings, virtually guarantees that on the whole black students will at least initially tend to do less well than than white students. To the extent that informal peer status structures revolve around academic achievement, the average black student faces a challenge to his status that the average white student does not.

Cooperation toward shared goals. In addition to providing conditions which foster equal status contact between groups, Pettigrew argues that a truly integrated school must provide meaningful opportunities for individuals from both groups to strive cooperatively to meet shared goals. Nexler has certainly done much to foster these opportunities. When students arrived at Nexler on their very first day of school they saw a bulletin board by the main entrance just to the right of the principal's office. The word on the bulletin

board read, "This should be the finest school." This motto remained on the prominently placed bulletin board throughout the school year. Its importance was emphasized by the fact that nothing else was ever placed there with it.

The fact that the school is new has greatly increased the number of opportunities for students to be cooperatively involved in working for shared goals. For example, a large number of students were involved in fund raising activities to purchase equipment which the school doesn't have. Children in the band, for instance, sold candles to buy uniforms. Also, approximately 75% of the black and white students in two homerooms observed in this study participated actively in a candy sale to build a fund which could provide supplies for a broad range of club activities by selling boxes of candy. Other activities such as athletic competition with other schools have also contributed to building cooperation and unity in the school.

In addition to sponsoring a very broad range of after school activities, Wexler has two "directed activity" periods a week built into its curriculum. Students are offered a choice of activities ranging from blue jeans decorating to poetry reading and ping pong. Some of these groups are segregated, or nearly so, reflecting both prior friendship patterns and culturally influenced differences in interests between black

and white students. Nevertheless, the clear majority of the groups show a significant amount of racial mixing (no more than 75% of the students are of one race). Although students work on individual projects in some of these clubs, the large majority have at least some activities in which cooperation toward shared goals is required. A notable example would be the directed activity group which presented a production of the musical Anything Goes in which the leading roles were filled by a white boy and a black girl.

In general, Hexler's teachers do not encourage academic competition between students. For example, one sixth grade team we observed uses individualized instruction. Students have weekly work contracts. The amount and level of work assigned varies according to the student's skill, but anyone who fulfills his or her contract gets an A. However, there are some notable exceptions to the teachers' generally shared tendency to avoid promoting competition. Mr. Hue, for example, has divided his classes into a "fast" group 1, and a "slow" group 2. At the beginning of the year Mr. Hue had a poster in the front of the room labelled "Super-Mathematician" upon which he would post the names of students who did especially well on tests.

Although competition is generally not encouraged, the teachers differ dramatically in the extent to which they try

to structure their classroom procedures in ways which discourage competition and emphasize cooperation. Mr. Little actually takes a very negative view of competition and tries to foster cooperation. He says,

> "During academic time, I really don't want competition... It excludes too many people."
> February, 1976

Observation in his classroom suggests that he actively uses a variety of mechanisms to promote cooperation. Children in his class typically sit at small tables and collaboration is encouraged for most projects. He also encourages cooperation toward common goals by devices as simple as dismissing children at each table as a group when all of them are ready. An excerpt from our field notes illustrates his use of this device.

> "Mr. Little says, 'Well, it's almost time to go. Which table is ready?' Students from all tables look up at him and about half of the students are frantically waving their hands in the air. Mr. Little says, 'O.K., it's table A first today. You all look cleaned up.'"
> October, 1975

However, many other teachers do little to actively foster cooperation. Typical of this group is Mr. Don, another sixth grade teacher.

Interviewer:	How important do you think competition is as a motivation for learning?
Mr. Don:	I guess it's important, but it has to be within groups so that kids can compete

with their own level. We have kids here that are very, very smart. To have the average or below average student compete with someone above them would be frustrating.

Interviewer: Are the kids themselves competitive?

Mr. Don: The more motivated kids... are competitive among themselves, but the average students aren't.

Interviewer: Do you think in general competition ought to be discouraged or encouraged?

Mr. Don: I wouldn't encourage it at all. I think a lot of the kids are pressured into things too young... I guess I'm not a believer in competition.

Interviewer: Do you find yourself doing anything to discourage competition among kids?

Mr. Don: No, I don't. I don't discourage it but I don't encourage it either.

March, 1976.

Support for positive relations. The final criterion Pettigrew isolates as crucial to true integration is the support of the concerned authorities for positive intergroup relations. The authorities connected with the school, both white and black, strongly support positive intergroup contact. At the school dedication ceremony in November, a black School Board member, Reverend Hughes, related how the school had been named.

> "Reverend Hughes then went on to say that he had been on the naming committee for the school. When he was thinking about names, he asked his wife for suggestions. His wife, he related jocularly, said, 'Be sure it's a woman. How

> about Harriet Wexler or Susan Truman?' After reflecting on the matter, he submitted Mrs. Wexler's name. He said, 'I was very glad when I heard they decided to call it the Harriet Wexler School. I felt that I had a part. I worked with her for years.'"

Later in the dedication program, the widowed husband of Mrs. Wexler added:

> I can picture my wife looking down from on high and casting a blessing on what we are doing today. Her whole life was dedicated to people of all races and creeds... This school is a living memorial to what she stood for - equality of the races, equality of education and equality of hope and understanding.

At Wexler, the administrators with day to day responsibilities at the school like the principal are also strongly supportive of positive intergroup relations. The importance of this administrative support is highlighted by St. John (1975, p.98) who writes "Administrative sanction is probably the most important precondition of prejudice-reducing contact in schools. If central office staff is determined that integration shall be complete, the status of all school children made equal, and racial competition avoided, the other necessary ingredients of healthy biracial schools probably will follow."

Wexler's principal's strong support for positive intergroup behavior is illustrated by his behavior in a

situation he described in an interview at the end of the third month of school. The usually mild mannered principal said...

> "I have only seen one racial fight...Two kids were fighting out in the hall during lunch time and the white kid ended up calling the black kid a nigger several times at the top of his lungs. He and I are the only two whites in the hall with about fifty black kids...I got pretty violent with the kid...I grabbed him by the throat. I had to do something very strong. I brought him in the office and talked to him. He was pretty ashamed about calling the kid a name...He knew he was wrong for bringing names in."
>
> February, 1976

Parents are also authorities whose attitudes toward intergroup relations are likely to be crucial. The extent to which parents value interracial schooling as opposed to tolerating it varies widely. For example, on a local television special about Wexler aired in November 1975 right after the school's opening only one of the five parents speaking, a black woman, specifically gave the fact that the school was interracial as a major reason for enrolling her child there. The other parents, both black and white, stressed the academic programs. One of the white parents said that she had been "locked into" sending her child to Wexler because she wanted the child, who had been admitted to the scholars program, to participate in it. Hence, Wexler's interracial student body was not a major attraction for all parents, or perhaps even

for most parents. However, the fact remains that in the 1975-76 school year all parents of children in the school were sufficiently accepting of interracial schooling that they sent their child to Wexler in spite of the fact that essentially segregated schools were readily available. Obviously, the situation was quite different in 1976-77 under the feeder pattern policy.

Teachers are virtually unanimous in agreeing that racially motivated negative behavior should not be tolerated. They do, however, vary in the extent they are actively committed to fostering positive intergroup relations as the following two excerpts from interviews suggest.

> "Being a teacher, I guess academics is more important (than personal or social development)...I think we were told once that we shouldn't be concerned that much in sixth grade with the academics of the children who aren't too socialized yet, you know...It was presented to us that socialization, them getting along with each other, black, white or from other areas, is the important skill development right now and the academic is secondary...I think teachers say, 'yea, yea, right, sure' and then they go and teach, try to teach." Mr. Don, February, 1976

> (Referring to teaching children to get along with each other) "Some of the socialization processes are really needed...A lot of times I'm at a loss of how to get across." Ms. Wire, March, 1976

Finally students appear to understand that school authorities are supportive of positive intergroup relations. When asked why the Board of Education arranged a three day camp experience for Wexler students before school opened in September, 14 of the 15 students interviewed stated spontaneously that they believed the Board wanted them to make new friends; 13 of these 14 mentioned this reason before all others.

Wexler, especially in its first year of operation, appears to meet the criteria for true integration about as well as is likely in the context of present day American society. It is clear there are a number of ways in which the school falls seriously short of meeting complete the conditions for true integration outlined by Pettigrew. However, most of these shortcomings stem from larger societal conditions over which the school itself has little or no control. One might argue that interracial schooling should be postponed until all of these inequities have been completely overcome. However, as Pettigrew (1969) persuasively argues this strategy is likely to prolong the very existence of societal inequities.

Research Strategies Utilized

This section of the report will outline the methods used in collecting and analyzing the data upon which the rest of the report is built. As will be seen, we have been observing a very broad range of activities in the school. Decisions about what to observe have been made with three general goals in mind: (1) getting a broad picture of the experiences which students and staff have in the school; (2) exploring the extent to which the school attempts to meet Pettigrew's criteria for true integration and the problems it encounters in this endeavor, and (3) mapping the developing patterns of association and friendship between black and white students and pin pointing factors which seem to influence these patterns.

Our observations have been planned to yield a fairly comprehensive picture of what the Wexler experience is like. However, because goals two and three are so vitally important, we did not adopt strategies like time sampling which would insure that one obtained observations on events in strict proportion to their frequency of occurrence. Rather, Glaser and Strauss' (1967) strategy of theoretical sampling has been consciously adopted. Hence, events which appeared likely to clarify our developing understanding of social

processes and relationships in the school were actively sought out and greatly "over-sampled."

Observation

The basic methodology employed has been detailed observation of ongoing interaction. Most of this observation has been oriented towards faithfully capturing the flow of social behavior in all of its rich variety and complexity. This orientation has predominated in the extensive observation of classrooms, teachers' meetings, and special school events such as field trips.

Information on pertinent aspects of the classes routinely observed follows in Table 1. As can be seen, in the first year of the study we confined classroom observation to the sixth grade house. The decision to focus regular observation in the sixth grade stemmed from several considerations. I felt that the project's relatively small research staff could not hope to come to know all three houses in really fine detail at the same time. Since the houses are relatively self-contained it seemed wise to concentrate our effort on understanding one house. This allowed us to deal with a reasonably manageable system of about 400 children and 20 adults. I chose to focus on the sixth grade house since its students would be in the school throughout the course of the two and one-half year research project.

Table 1

Classroom Observation

Year of Study	Name	Race	Grade[a]	Typical Number of Observation Periods per week
1st	Mr. Little	White	6	3-4[b]
1st	Ms. Wire	White	6	1
1st	Ms. Monroe	Black	6	2-3[b]
1st	Mr. Hue	Black	6	1-2
2nd	Mr. Werner	White	7	1
2nd	Mrs. Partridge	Black	7	2
2nd	Mr. Gutkind	White	7	1
2nd	Ms. Green	Black	7	2
2nd	Ms. Grossman	Black	OVT[c]	1/2[d]
2nd	Ms. Zaharris	White	OVT	1/2
2nd	Mr. Latham	White	OVT	1

[a]The specific subjects taught by the teachers are not listed in order to help preserve confidentiality. However, classes in a wide range of subjects were observed as discussed on page 55.
[b]Two separate types of classes, academic classes and a Teacher Advisory (TA) period were observed for this teacher. This accounts for the relatively large number of observations per week in this class.
[c]OVT is the acronym used for Occupational-Vocational and Technical classes such as shop, home economics etc. Also included in this category for purposes of the Table are gym classes.
[d]Ms. Grossman and Ms. Zaharris were often jointly responsible for a relatively large group of students.

In the second year of the study, the two teams of children previously observed as sixth graders were observed as they moved through the seventh grade.

During the course of the study we observed routinely in a wide variety of academic classes including social studies, math, language arts and science. We also observed very diverse non-academic settings. In addition to sitting in on classes such as gym, health, home economics, we also observed both Directed Activities (DA) and Teacher Advisory (TA) periods. The DA's are in-school clubs which meet twice a week for activities such as learning photography or yoga, listening to music or watching old movies. The purpose of the TA's as outlined to teachers in a summer workshop is "to develop communication and interaction between teacher and student and student and student through effective education types of activities." Finally, other classes not listed on the table were observed

from time to time to increase the researchers' familiarity with the broad range of experiences students have within the school.

Observation of teachers meeting with each other and with administrators was also carried out intensively. For example, during the first year of the study, I regularly attended the planning meeting of one sixth grade, held each Thursday afternoon, as well as the sixth grade house meetings, and the all-school faculty meetings. Attendance at seventh and eighth grade house meetings also occurred on a less regular basis as did attendance at a great many special events ranging from teachers' workshops to Parents' Night.

The detailed observation of social process described above has been supplemented by other data gathering strategies designed to yield information on the broader context in which the interactions observed took place. To illustrate, copies of the school's daily bulletin as well as of the letters Wexler sends home to parents have been carefully collected. Also, officially sanctioned wall decorations like posters, mottos, and pictures and unofficial ones like bathroom graffiti have been noted.

Another very useful strategy for assessing the context in which the classroom interaction occurs has been more quantitatively oriented observation in the lunchroom. Once

a week a map was made of the seating pattern in the lunchroom during the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade lunch periods. The cafeteria is a large room with 32 rectangular tables. All tables seat sixteen, having eight seats along their two long sides. The seats are part of the table unit and cannot be moved. About ten minutes after the beginning of the lunch period for each grade, observers begin the mapping, noting the race and sex of the student in each seat as well as the location of empty seats.

Interviews

The observer no matter how omnipresent or insightful is at a great disadvantage if he does not test his emerging ideas through direct inquiry with the subjects of his observation. A visitor from a greatly different culture might, after listening to conversations in public places like offices or shops, conclude that Americans are obsessed with the weather. Rain or shine, hot or cold the weather is always commented upon. The acute observer might note that comments about the weather often follow awkward silences and begin to wonder about the social functions of such conversation. However, direct inquiry about why the weather is such a favorite topic of conversation would undoubtedly provide him with useful hypotheses which could then be assessed with more thought and further observation.

Because interviews can be so useful in providing the observers with the participants' perspective, interviews both formal and informal, have been used extensively in studying Wexler. For instance, the five teachers on each of the two teams being observed were each formally interviewed individually during the study's first year. (See Appendix I). Similarly in the second year, interviews were conducted with eight seventh grade teachers and eight sixth grade teachers. The depth and breadth of these interviews is suggested by the fact that the average single spaced typed transcript of these interviews is approximately 20 pages long. Other school personnel such as the principal, the sixth and seventh grade deans, the social worker in charge of all club and after school activities and non-academic teachers have been interviewed formally at least once each year so far. As can be seen from Appendix I, these interviews have been structured to insure that specific topics are covered. However, the questions are open-ended to maximize the respondent's freedom to discuss the question precisely as he or she sees it.

Two panels of students have also been interviewed intensively. The first panel of 20 students was chosen from students who entered Wexler's sixth grade when the school opened in 1975. These students were interviewed

at the beginning and end of their first year at Wexler and also at the end of their second year there. The following procedure was used in choosing these students. Students within the academic and TA classes observed were stratified by race and sex. One student in each of the four categories created by crossing race and sex was randomly selected from each of the four classes, yielding a total of 16 students. The remaining four students plus several alternates were chosen randomly from the four classes in a way that balanced the sex and race of the students on the panel.

The second panel, also of 20 students, was chosen from the students who entered Wexler as sixth graders under the new enrollment policy in 1976. These students were interviewed in the fall and again in the spring as their counterparts one year earlier had been. Also, they were selected by a similar stratified sampling method.

The student interviews, like those with the teachers and other school staff, were structured but primarily open-ended. (See Appendix II). Formal interviews, of course, have been supplemented by informal talks with students who are on the panel as well as with many others. All formal interviews were tape recorded. Notes on informal talks were dictated as soon after the event as possible.

Sociometric Data

In addition to intensive observation of naturally occurring events and interviews, occasionally data gathering strategies like the "Baretta Game" have been devised. The game was developed for use in the TA period as a measure of friendship patterns. The teacher chooses a student to be "It" and who must guess, using clues, the name of a well-known person the teacher is thinking of. All the other children get a written clue from the teacher. The student who is "It" then chooses another student to join him in front of the class. This student shares his clue and the one who is "It" gets one guess. If it is successful, another "It" is chosen. If he fails, he chooses a second student to get another clue. The usefulness of the game as a measure of friendship choice is suggested by the fact that on two separate occasions children who had not been chosen to provide a clue complained to the teacher that the child who was "It" picked only his friends.

Two types of sociometric sixth questionnaires have also been given to 15 classrooms in the sixth grade. The first type asks children to choose three classmates as play and work partners. The second has children rate all

other children in their class as play and work partners on a five point continuum. These questionnaires were administered to sixth graders in the fall of 1976 and then in the spring of 1977. It may be worth discussing briefly why I used these questionnaires in light of the serious problems associated with their use in desegregated schools discussed in the review of the literature. I decided to gather the sociometric data because I believe that by comparing the picture of the classrooms obtained through two quite different sociometric methods (peer nomination versis rating the entire class) I can make a worthwhile contribution to the field of sociometry and to the interpretation of studies using sociometric methods in interracial schools. Previous studies which have used only the peer nomination technique which measures relatively intense relationships may well have overstated the amount of racial cleavage in interracial classes and underestimated the amount of change in intergroup behavior which occurs over time. Although the argument for this proposition strikes me as logically compelling, it has yet to be put to an empirical test. In addition, the conclusions suggested by analysis of the sociometric data in this study can be compared to the conclusions suggested by the other data sources such as our classroom

observations. In this study in which the sociometric questionnaires are only one of many data sources brought to bear in drawing conclusions, the problems associated with their use use may be outweighed by the fact that they provide information on a very large sample of children.

This project report as mentioned earlier concerns itself primarily with the children who entered Wexler in its first year. The sociometric data were gathered from the students entering Wexler in its second year of operation. Hence, the results of the analysis of these data will not be discussed in this report.

Data Quality Control

The problem of observer bias can be a serious one in qualitative research. Bias can come from any number of sources. In this relatively brief report I will discuss a few of these sources of potential bias and some of the strategies we used to handle them. The following paragraph illustrates some of the problems which can arise and the procedures used to avoid or handle these problems. However, they are by no means a complete compilation of all the steps taken to minimize the impact of observer bias on data gathering and interpretation.

The observer in most classrooms cannot possibly hope to record literally everything which happens. Hence, a major source of bias may be the observer's selective recording of certain types of events. Although this problem seems next to impossible to surmount in qualitative observation there are certainly some steps which can minimize its negative effect. One obvious solution which we have found useful is to have multiple observers, each of whom has his own particular biases, observe a setting both simultaneously and separately. Through discussion of differences between the two observers' findings can help to point out individual biases or preconceptions. Another way to reduce the effect of biases is to consciously look for data which undercuts one's developing assessment of a situation.

Unwarranted inferences made by the observer can also be a potentially serious source of bias. To deal with this problem care was taken to make the field notes as factual and as concretely descriptive as possible. For example, instead of or in addition to saying that a child is angry one can record the behavioral manifestations such as a loud voice and a frown.

Selective recall also poses a significant problem when observations cannot be recorded as they are made. To

minimize these problems, extensive hand written notes were taken whenever it appeared that the gain in detail and completeness would outweigh losses from decreased frankness or spontaneity. Classroom observations were always made in this manner. At teachers' meetings and public events much less extensive notes were usually made. However, as soon afterwards as possible, occasionally even in a car in the school parking lot or in a cubicle in a rest room when detailed and precise recall seemed especially crucial, fuller notes were written. Shortly thereafter, usually within several hours, notes were dictated for transcription.

Even if the research team is able to set up procedures to minimize bias due to factors such as their own selective attention or selective recall, there are other factors which can lead to terribly biased data if they are not recognized and handled appropriately. For example, care must be taken in deciding which teachers to approach with requests for permission to observe in their classrooms. Perhaps the least biased way to choose such teachers would be a random selection process. However, such a process ignores the crucial importance of gaining access to classrooms in which the teachers are willing to share their ideas and insights with the research team.

offs in randomness for gains in the information but which, I believe, gave us a representative group of classrooms to observe.

The major source of suggestions about teachers to approach was a social worker who had extensive contact with the large majority of teachers through her involvement with the school's extracurricular and in-school club programs. I asked this woman the names of teachers who were (a) neither the school's very best nor the very worst teachers and (b) be likely to be willing to talk freely about their experiences and attitudes. The social worker was chosen as the primary source of names since she was not directly employed by the school and hence might have less vested interest than someone like the principal or the deans in making the school look extremely good.

Teachers were selected on the basis of (a) race, (b) subjects they taught and (c) scheduling considerations. We over-sampled black teachers in proportion to their numbers in the school because we thought children might interact differently in classes lead by black and white teachers. Also we felt it was important to develop close relations with a number of black as well as white teachers since these teachers might well have a perspective that would differ from those of their white colleagues. As

mentioned previously, we also felt it was important to observe in a wide range of classes. On a number of occasions when we wanted to observe a particular type of class, gym, for example, we requested permission to do so even though the teacher's name had not been mentioned to us. Finally, the efficient use of observer time was also a serious consideration. Interestingly, not one of the more than 20 teachers approached about routine or occasional observation in their classrooms refused.[10] Hence, self-selection on the part of teachers did not operate to bias the sample of classrooms we observed. To minimize any potentially biasing effect of our selection procedures, we were careful to try to build relationships with many teachers whose names had not been suggested to us. Also, the formal teacher interviews were conducted with a wide variety of teachers as mentioned previously.

Self-selection was also a potential problem in student interviews since parental permission had to be obtained. Only one parent of all those contacted refused such permission.[11] So the student sample too was free of serious self-selection biases. Attrition was also not a serious problem. No child refused to continue with the interviews after agreeing to the initial one. Only one child in our interview sample, a white male, left the school and had to be replaced.

Although self-selection was not a problem in this study, there is always the very real possibility that teachers or students who are being observed will act differently because of the observer's presence. To minimize the probability of the observer's presence causing changes in the social processes which the researcher is attempting to record and analyze we gave careful attention to developing a role in the school's social system which caused as little interference in the rest of the system as possible. For example, we took great pains not to be seen by the students as authority figures because it was felt that this would inhibit their openness and spontaneity. Hence, we made it a rule never to interfere in student activity unless we felt that clear physical danger for a student was imminent.[12] We presented ourselves to students as individuals from a university who are interested in what happens in school and how children like school. When pressed for something more concrete, we would say that we were writing a book. Our success in cultivating a relatively unobtrusive role is attested to the following excerpt from the field notes.

> "Today as I entered the sixth grade house as classes were changing I saw Richard and another black male whom I don't know tussling. After glancing at me, Richard's companion drew away from him and leaned over as if to pick up his books on the floor. Richard said, 'Aw, come

on, she just writes. She never does anything.' He then gave his companion a light shove and they were at it again."

Similarly, considerable effort was expended in building rapport with the teachers and gaining their trust so that they would speak and act freely in our presence. Several factors appeared crucial to achieving this goal including non-interference in events in the classroom, a non-judgemental and sympathetic attitude, careful guarding of confidentiality, and reciprocity. Again, the success we have had in building and maintaining a role which gives us access to crucial information is best attested to by the type of information teachers made available to us. For example, one teacher told me that she had purposely miscounted votes in a student council election so that a "responsible child" (a white male) would win rather than an "unstable child" (a black female). The teacher said that she was uncertain about the appropriateness of this action and therefore did not plan to tell even other teachers about it. More recently, I attended a meeting at which teachers planned how to handle a very difficult situation with a parent. Together they arranged a story which varied widely from what they had just told me had actually happened. The story, concocted in hushed whispers after one teacher checked to make certain no one was in the hallways, presented the teachers in a more favorable light

than did the actual events as related to me and as revealed in their discussion.

Data Analysis

A wide variety of data analytic strategies have been used. These strategies vary from reading and reflecting on the field notes in search of themes and ideas to using relatively sophisticated statistics required to create and analyze the indices of interracial mixing in the cafeteria. Naturally, the specific strategy used depends on the particular data which are being analyzed.

Nevertheless, a few general principles have guided all of the data analysis effort. First, I have taken very seriously Webb et al's (1966) suggestion that many rather different sorts of evidence should be brought to bear on an idea whenever possible. For instance, later in this report when discussing changes in friendship patterns over time I use information from student and teacher interviews, from the lunchroom observation, and from the Barotta game. This use of multiple data sources is especially crucial since some types of data are much more subject to bias or reactivity problems than others.

A second general principle which I took very seriously was that data analysis should be an on-going and iterative

FINDINGS

Interracial Relationships at Wexler: Promise and Problems

Wexler first opened its doors to students in September, 1975. At that time there were two extremely different views about how successful the school was likely to be as a social and educational institution. On the one hand, there were many who shared the very high hopes expressed by Mr. Wexler's words at the school dedication ceremony. (see p.48). People of this persuasion emphasized the fact that all students had chosen to attend Wexler. They argued that the interracial "volunteer" student body combined with the school's innovative plans for team teaching made Wexler a school of extraordinary promise. Less than two weeks after the school had opened a 30 minute TV program called "The Birth of a New School" praised Wexler as "one of the best - the most integrated and innovative school in this area."

On the other hand, many people felt that the school would be plagued by serious racial problems. An excerpt from an interview with Mr. Little illustrates this perspective.

Interviewer: What did the other teachers think of your decision to come here?

Mr. Little: It was a mixed thing, some teachers thought it was a dumb thing to do... There were negative images of what was going to happen over here... imagine the problems you are going to have racially...you are going to have a lot of confrontations. This

was their feeling...I had a lot
of apprehensions coming in because
of the racial thing...
February, 1976

Even before school opened a rumor circulated through a nearby white community that because of bad behavior over 100 children, mostly black, had been expelled from a summer program designed to familiarize students with each other and the school. The belief that serious racial problems were inevitable was strengthened by the fact that in 1967 another local school which had been much praised for its innovative programs and racial mix (37% black, 63% white) unexpectedly experienced serious racial violence.

Our research on the school during the course of its first two years suggests that it has fulfilled neither the optimistic prediction that the school would quickly promote interracial friendship and understanding nor the pessimistic prediction that racial strife would be widespread and disruptive. There have been extremely few serious racial conflicts. However, there has also been relatively little increase in interracial friendship. The purpose of this section of the report is to present the evidence upon which the above statements are based. Later sections of the report will explore the factors which appear to account for the way in which relations have evolved.

Agreement is widespread among the school faculty that overt racial problems are minimal or even non-existent

as the following excerpts from interviews suggest.

> "I haven't seen any racial problems so far, if there are any I'm unaware of them."
>
> Ms. Nobel (White Math Teacher)
> February, 1976

> "I think our students get along beautifully. I didn't see any fights, it was really within race that you saw them."
>
> Ms. Qualls (Black Math Teacher)
> June, 1977

Administrators also see racial problems are practically non-existent:

> Interviewer: You said that another thing that leads to suspension is fighting. What sorts of issues usually bring out a fight?
>
> Principal: As I see them it is...very seldom racial, very seldom. I have seen only one racial fight. (Usually it's) petty things, you know, someone bumps someone in line...that kind of thing... Petty little things that kids will fight for...90% of our fights the kids start out playing with each other and someone hits someone too hard and there is a fight.
>
> Interviewer: Do you have any problems or arguments between kids which start out as non-racial and turn into a thing where they start calling each other names?
>
> Principal: I haven't seen it...I haven't seen any of that at all.
>
> February, 1976

Our observations support the staff's view that there are few overt racial problems. During the course of the study nearly 500 separate class meetings have been observed. In all of those observations as well as in our more informal observations in hallways and on playgrounds, we have witnessed only five instances in which a child used a racial epithet or made a derogatory racial reference to a child of another race. Field notes on two of these instances follow

to illustrate the type of overt negative interactions which occur.

Lauri (white) is standing by Sara's (white) table talking to her. There's some interaction with Darin (black) too which I didn't hear. Lauri apparently said something about Darin's black face and Mr. James overhearing intervenes. Lauri says to him, "Darin said I was a honky." Neither of the kids looks genuinely disturbed or angry. Mr. James, smiling slightly, asks Darin largely rhetorically, "What's a honky?" Darin just smiles without responding. Mr. James seeming to consider Lauri the instigator asks her, "Does he have a black face?" Darin holds out a black pen in his fist and says, "This is black." Mr. James repeats his question to Lauri again, and Lauri says, "It's brown." Mr. James asks Darin, "Did she make you feel bad? Did she hurt your feelings?" Darin puts his face in his hands and pretends to sob silently with mock hurt. Mr. James suggests that Lauri apologize. She says something inaudible and Mr. James still smiling says, "Are you going to apologize graciously or are you going to be a honky?" Lauri's also smiling and now she says very clearly, "I apologize." Darin smiles and spreads his hands in a gesture of exaggerated magnanimity saying, "I accept your apology."

May, 1977

Quinn (black) is now standing by Laura (white) and Tanya (black) and the three are talking, laughing, and kidding together. This continues after Quinn returns to his seat near Donald (black) One of the girls calls something across to Calvin (white) and then one of them says, "Look, he's blushing." Shortly after, Donald refers to someone, apparently Laura, as a white prostitute...Laura blushes momentarily but resumes talking animatedly with Tanya. Laura says, referring to a boy she's been describing, "He's the tall kid with the dark brown hair." Tanya goes, "OOH!" practically getting out of her seat. Both girls are laughing. Quinn interjects, "He lives over near Laura." Laura retorts in a mocking voice, "Now who told you that, Quinn?" She then adds, "He doesn't like me any more." Kelly (black), one of the boys at the center table says incredulously, "Anymore?" She responds, "He used to like me." Kelly, still sounding grimly derogatory rather than kidding says, "Nobody

could like her. Not even my dog." Then, the bell rings and the teacher says, "Take your books to your lockers..."

November, 1977

In addition to there being little verbal evidence of interracial hostility, there is also little other overt evidence of such hostility. For example, our field notes from the first year of the study show only ten instances of physical aggression serious enough to be labelled real fights.[13] Of these ten instances only four were interracial. There was no evidence in any of these cases that the fight was actually motivated by racial considerations. Graffiti from the sixth grade rest rooms as well as from two rest rooms used by all students have been recorded at regular intervals. Of the approximately 400 separate words or phrases found not a single one makes any racial reference. Hundreds of graffiti on the outside of the school, on desks and on walls have also been inspected. Only one of these made any racial reference. Near the end of the school's first year we found one graffiti scrawled in pencil on a white sheet of paper in a small room used for conferences with students and parents which said "I hate white people."

Although the pessimists' predictions of a Blackboard Jungle have not been fulfilled neither have the optimists' predictions that black and white students will quickly and naturally become friends when put together under Wexler's favorable conditions. Analysis of seating patterns in the lunchroom suggests considerable racial isolation and relatively little change over the course of the two years. The basic index of racial interaction in the lunchroom was constructed using a formula for seating aggregation developed by Campbell, Kruskal, and Wallace (1966) in their

study of interracial seating patterns in college classrooms. This index is based upon a comparison of the actual frequency with which blacks and whites sit together to the expected frequency. The expected frequency is based on the proportion of blacks in the sample and the number of adjacencies observed. (Individuals are not considered adjacent if they are separated by an empty seat). The index is constructed so that negative values represent more aggregation than would be expected if individuals sat randomly with respect to race whereas positive values represent less aggregation than would be expected. To find out if students are aggregated by race one can use a t-test to see if the seating index departs significantly from 0, the value associated with random seating.

Two separate indices of racial aggregation were computed. The first called Across (A) was based on the patterns created by considering students sitting opposite each other at a table as forming two person groups. The second called Beside (B) was based on seating patterns along the sides of the tables. These two indices were used since our observations suggested that students talk a lot to those seated across from them as well as to those sitting beside them. Indices of sexual aggregation were computed in precisely the same manner as indices of racial aggregation. Data are presented for the seventh and eighth grades only since students were occasionally assigned to specific tables in the sixth grade.

Inspection of Table 2 suggests that children clearly tend to segregate themselves by race at lunch. The mean racial aggregation index for indices A and B were -1.69 and -1.74 respectively. The actual amount

of racial clustering indicated by these means can be illustrated by examining a fairly typical observation which yielded racial aggregation indices of -1.57 (A) and -1.62 (B). These indices were based on the seating locations of 138 white and 109 black students. Random distribution of these students within the pattern of occupied seats could be expected to have resulted in 41 "across" adjacencies and 67 "beside" adjacencies. Only nine of the former and 13 of the latter were found.

Two factors need to be considered in interpreting the meaning of the figures presented in the last paragraph. First, although racial aggregation is striking, Table 3 shows that sexual aggregation is even more complete. Second, compared to other studies our data suggest that Wexler students mix racially more than is often typical in interracial schools (Cusick & Ayling, 1973; Silverman & Shaw, 1973; Slavin, 1977). For example, Cusick and Ayling (1973) report that they were unable to have a discussion with a racially mixed group over lunch at a high school because the informal pattern of segregated black and white tables was so strong that students were unwilling to break it. Silverman and Shaw (1973) found that interracial interactions ranged from a low of .7% of all interactions to a high of 10% in three schools which were 30 to 50% black. Hence, although our data suggest relatively little cross-race interaction they do not confirm the finding of essentially total racial isolation of earlier studies.

To examine the question of whether there was any noticeable change over time in the amount of racial clustering, correlations between elapsed time and the weekly aggregation indices were computed (Schofield & Sagar, 1977a, 1977b).

TABLE 2

Mean Racial Aggregation Indices

Years in Desegregated School	Grade level	n of observations	Overall		Males only		Females only	
			Beside	Across	Beside	Across	Beside	Across
First	7	(17)	-1.71	-1.66	-1.51	-1.44	-1.82	-1.82
	8	(17)	-1.77	-1.71	-1.65	-1.49	-1.84	-1.84
Second	7	(31)	-1.78	-1.69	-1.63	-1.48	-1.90	-1.85
	8	(30)	-1.67	-1.62	-1.42	-1.46	-1.86	-1.77

Note. Larger negative numbers represent greater aggregation, or less interracial seating.

TABLE 3

Comparison of Racial and Sexual Aggregation

Grade level	Type of index	n of Observations	Grouping factor: Race	Grouping factor: Sex	t	p
7	SS	31	-1.78	-1.97	8.28	< .001
	FF	31	-1.69	-1.96	7.94	< .001
8	SS	30	-1.67	-1.92	9.60	< .001
	FF	30	-1.62	-1.87	6.69	< .001

Note. Larger negative numbers represent comparatively greater aggregation by race or sex.

TABLE 4

Changes in Overall Racial Aggregation

Years in Desegregated School	Grade level	n of observations	Beside	Across
First	7	(17)	.44*	.45*
	8	(17)	-.05	-.53*
Second	7	(31)	-.34	-.29
	8	(30)	-.14	-.43*

Note. Positive correlations represent decreasing racial aggregation (i.e., greater interracial mixing) over time. *p <.05, two-tailed.

In the school's first year, an increase over time in racial mixing was apparent in the seventh grade. For example, the data from June 1976 show three times as many adjacencies as the February data.[14] However, in June there were still fewer than one-fifth the number of adjacencies that would have resulted from random mixing. This pattern of increased mixing in the seventh grade did not recur in the 1976-77 school year. Interestingly, the data from the eighth grade show almost precisely the same pattern in both years. There was little if any change in interracial "beside" seating and a marked decrease in interracial "across" seating. These results are hardly surprising given the heavily segregated nature of the school's eighth grade.

A number of other data sources confirm the conclusions suggested by the lunchroom data that relations between black and white sixth and seventh grades changed relatively little over time. For example, the results of the "Baretta Game" show no noticeable increase in cross-racial choice during the course of the school's first year.

Table 5

Student Choices in "Baretta"Game

Date	N	% picking own race	
		first choice	second choice
Oct., 1975	10	80	66
March, 1976	16	75	67

The data from our interviews with the panel of students are also consistent with this conclusion. (See Tables 6 and 7). Students' responses to the question, "How well do kids get along with each other at Wexler compared to your old school?" did not change significantly

TABLE 6

Students' Evaluation of Their Integrated School Experience
Compared to Prior School Experience, October, 1975 - May 1977[a]

Question	Black Males		Black Females		White Males		White Females		Signi-ficance[b]
	'75	'77	'75	'77	'75	'77	'75	'77	
How good a school is Wexler?	6.8	7.2	7.2	1.6	6.8	7.2	5.6	4.0	
How good are Wexler's teachers?	7.6	2.6	7.0	-0.2	7.6	2.4	6.4	5.0	.01 Time
How friendly are students?	7.0	5.8	6.2	2.2	-1.8	0.8	5.2	0.6	
How well behaved are students?	6.8	2.4	2.2	-5.2	0.4	-2.4	2.4	-4.2	.001 Time
How well do students get along?	6.4	3.8	4.6	0.0	2.8	2.8	2.0	-0.6	
How hard is it to get good grades?	8.0	5.0	6.0	6.6	5.4	-0.4	1.0	-1.6	.05 Time
How much school pride is there?	7.0	0.6	4.4	-2.0	8.8	4.2	5.2	-3.4	.01 Race .05 Sex .001 Time
How do you feel about coming to Wexler?	8.4	6.4	7.2	2.6	6.0	6.1	5.6	3.6	

[a]Students responded to these questions by choosing a number on a continuum from -10 to +10. The neutral point on the continuum was 0. The continua, which were labelled at 5 points, went from (+10) "much better", "much friendlier", "much harder to get good grades", etc. to (-10) "much worse", "much less friendly", "much easier to get good grades," etc. All questions except for the last asked for a comparison between Wexler and the student's previous school.

[b]These significance levels are based on the F's produced by a repeated measured analysis of variance with race and sex as fully crossed classifying factors and time as the repeated measure. The analysis is based on an N of 20 with 5 students in each cell. For brevity's sake the actual F tables are omitted. All significant main effects and interaction are indicated in the right hand column. Probability levels are for two-tailed tests.

TABLE 7

Students' Reactions to Their Integrated School Experience in the Spring of Their First and Second Years of Interracial Schooling

Question	Black Males		Black Females		White Males		White Females		Significance[c]
	'76	'77	'76	'77	'76	'77	'76	'77	
How much intimidation is there here at Wexler?	8.8	8.2	11.6	7.0	12.4	10.8	6:2	9.2	
How much fighting is there here at Wexler?[a]	9.2	7.4	7.2	10.0	10.6	10.8	6.8	7.8	
How often do you think kids feel afraid of other kids here?[b]	5.0	-1.4	6.8	-0.8	7.2	4.2	5.8	3.2	.001 Time
How often do kids ignore or reject who is trying to be friends?[b]	3.0	-6.8	5.8	0.2	3.4	-4.0	4.8	0.0	.05 Race
How often do kids here make fun of the way others look or talk?[b]	6.6	5.6	8.4	7.0	8.2	6.4	5.8	5.0	

[a]Students responded to these questions by choosing a number on a 16 point continuum from +15 to 0. Four points were labelled from +15 "There are fights (intimidation) all the time" to 0, "There's no fighting (intimidation) here.

[b]Students responded to these questions by choosing a number on 21 point continuum from +10 to -10 to indicate how Wexler compares with their old school. Positive numbers indicate that the behavior occurs at Wexler more than at the previous school, whereas negative numbers indicate the opposite. The actual labels are (+10) "a lot more often, (+5) a little more often, (0) about the same, (-5) a little less often and (-10) "a lot less often."

[c]These significance levels are based on the F's produced by a repeated measures analysis of variance with race and sex as fully crossed classifying factors and time as the repeated measure. The analysis is based on an N of 20 with 5 students in each cell. For brevity's sake the actual F tables are omitted. All significant main effects and interactions are indicated in the right hand column. Probability levels are for two-tailed tests.

between October 1975 and May, 1977. In addition there was no significant change in students' responses to the question, "How friendly are kids here at Wexler compared to your old school?"

Interviews at the end of the students' first year and the end of their second year investigated their perceptions of the amount of negative behavior which occurred. As Table 7 shows, the children saw no change from one year to the next in the amount of intimidation, fighting, rejection or ridicule they encountered. However, although their perceptions of the amount of negative behavior remained largely unchanged, their subjective reactions to their environment did change in a significant way. At the end of the second year both black and white children reported feeling frightened less often than they did at the end of the first year.

The qualitative part of the student interview suggests a little more change over time than the quantitative part does. At the end of their second year at Wexler, the 20 seventh grade students on our panel were asked whether they thought relations between blacks and whites were any different their second year at Wexler than in their first. Approximately half of both the black and white students felt that there had been some positive change. The rest with just one exception, saw no change. Norman, a black male, gave one of the most positive assessments of the situation.

Interviewer: Ok, now do you think that the black and white kids get along worse this year than last, or is it better or the same?

Norman: I think they get along better this year than last because last year there was a little bit of trouble...But this year, it's like everybody as the same color...they just think of everybody is one color.
May, 1977

The comments of another black male, Kenny, are typical forstudents who perceive little change.

Interviewer: Do you think that the black and white kids get along worse this year than last, or better, or about the same?
Kenny: About the same...they get along the same cause they weren't really enemies last year and they're not really enemies this year.
May, 1977

When asked to compare intergroup relations at the beginning and end of their second year at Wexler, students almost without exception perceived small positive changes. Typical of their comments are the excerpts from the interview below.

Interviewer: Are things different between black and white students compared to September?
Janice(black): Uhhum (Affirmatively)
Interviewer: How?
Janice: Most of them are friendlier now. Last September they wasn't fighting, they were just getting to know them...We get along better now because we are sharing things.
May, 1977

In summary our data suggest that overt racial conflicts are few and far between. In addition, black and white children seem able and willing to interact with each other reasonably peacefully when they are put in a situation which requires such behavior. However, even after two years of experience in a very favorable environment, black and white children rarely seek each other out as friends. Rather, they seem to interact primarily with children of their own group. In general, the relationship

between most black and white students is best characterized as a sort of distant but relatively peaceful coexistence. Ms. Wire's comments seem to describe the relationship very accurately.

> "I think that some of the students came here with fears or apprehension...Some of them came from all black schools and some came from all white schools...They never knew a person from the other side. But (now) I think you can see a relaxed atmosphere. Even if some of the students are never friends and never sleep over at each others' houses or go together on weekends...they are capable of working together and not shunning one another because of their color...You know, a black student wouldn't refuse to work with a white or a white to work with a black. It has never happened in my class. And it seems like they are getting used to each other and their similarities and differences...(People from the other group become) acquaintances to say hello to.
> March, 1976

The Teachers' Ideology

As I observed in the school and attempted to understand the development of social relationships between black and white children it became increasingly clear that the vital question was why neither the potential of interracial violence and conflict nor the potential for a significant increase in interracial friendship had materialized. Doubtless there are a number of factors which singly and in combination help account for this. I would like to start my analysis of these factors by discussing one such factor which I believe has placed a decisive role in the development of peer relations at Wexler -- the combination of beliefs, value positions and assumptions which I will roughly characterize as the teachers' ideology. This ideology appears to lie behind the actions that the teachers take or decide not to take and thus appears to influence tremendously the context in which black and white students at Wexler become acquainted.

The "Academics First" Orientation

Although Mr. Reuben often stresses the importance of the social outcomes of schooling, the administrators and the vast majority of the faculty in the sixth and seventh grade houses clearly see teaching academic skills as their overriding mission. The excerpt from the interview with Mr. Don presented earlier (see p.50) exemplifies this point of view as does the following excerpt from an interview with Ms. Sharp, a white reading teacher:

> "I really feel that the school is an academic setting. Quite frankly I think that's what its primary function is. I think it is good for the children to interact socially... but I'm coming from an academic point of view. My emphasis is on academics. I believe a school should have an academic orientation."
>
> March, 1977

Some teachers like Mr. Don and Ms. Sharp give top priority to academics because they believe that almost total concentration on the traditional academic curriculum is the appropriate role for a teacher. Others emphasize academics because they see success in this area as important not only in itself but also for children's personal and social development. Mr. James clearly articulates this view.

> "I'm one who believes that Wexler is leaning a little too much toward social development as opposed to academic development. Not that I'm against social development, but I feel that many of the social problems that kids have are due to academic problems...I think kids have to be taught study skills. I think they have to be taught essentially how to succeed. And once you have that foundation then the social skills (will follow). As he succeeds, the child's self-awareness becomes more positive. Socially he becomes happier and better.
>
> August, 1977

Ms. Short says:

> Quite frankly, on our team the kids who are the poorest readers and the poorest academic students are the same children that are always being suspended...I am not saying that they are mentally retarded but their achievement level is very low. And if they are constantly frustrated in class day in and day out, and many times they are, they take all their problems out on other kids around them. You see it in the halls where these kids are hitting on other kids or trying to boost them out of their lunch tickets just to show how tough they are...to achieve some status...or prestige.
>
> March, 1976

Mr. James and Ms. Short empnasize the importance of academic failure as a cause for discipline problems and see academic improvement as a possible cure. Ms. Partridge sees emphasis on academic work as preventive medicine too.

> "(We) keep them working constently with the idea that if you keep them working that you will not have as many problems.
>
> June, 1977

The teachers' inclination to stress academic work very heavily is reinforced by numerous factors. Hence, those teachers who themselves are interested in adopting practices which lead to more interracial interaction are constantly pressured to focus almost exclusively on traditional strictly academic materials. In addition, non-traditional classroom procedures such as cooperetive work groups are often resisted because they are perceived as undermining academic progress for the sake of social goals. The pressures which reinforce the almost exclusive emphasis on academics come from parents, from the students themselves, and from certain structural features of the school.

Parents, especially white parents, react vociferously when they hear of practices which they believe are not conducive to the absolute maximization of their children's immediate academic achievement. For example,

Ms. Partridge set up learning stations where students who were done with the regular work could work on unusual and interesting extra credit projects. She says of these projects:

> "I thougnt they were nice little extra credit things...like making graphs and counting things...It was a way the kids could socialize. These projects don't really have the pressure of word problems...It was a way of doing things related to math and the kids could get to know each other because some of the slower children could work with some of these things along with the faster ones."
>
> June, 1977

The projects were clearly designed to promote social interaction on a relatively equal status basis between students with different achievement levels. For example, one project involved doing a survey of the classes' television viewing habits and another required finding out each other's birthdays. However, some parents strongly objected to such projects. Ms. Partridge tells what happened:

> Ms. Partridge: I had several parents call Mr. Reuben and say, "What does this have to do with math?" They felt... that...an extra credit assignment should deal with the basics or with getting a child prepared for algebra. Especially with the brighter students the parents were concerned with getting them into the scholar's program...There is a pressure there...Last year I was really amazed that students who got a 8+ were highly upset. They said, "My parents will kill me."
>
> Interviewer: Did you decide to discontinue the stations yourself or was it recommended to you?
>
> Ms. Partridge: Well, Mr. Reuben said, "Do you think you're over-extending yourself?" I felt that if some of the parents felt so strongly about the stations I should discontinue them.
>
> Interviewer: Could you identify this pressure from the parents with one race more than the other, or was it...
>
> Ms. Partridge: Definitely. It seems to be more the white parents... I don't know whether our black parents don't really understand what's going on here or do not put so much emphasis on A's or B's.. I think so many of our black parents feel that their children are coming from inferior schools...They don't do as much pushing.
>
> June, 1977

The children too are quick to react when they feel that their individual academic progress is being sacrificed to promote other's achievement or more general social goals. An incident from Mr. James' class illustrates this clearly. Mr. James organizes most of his social studies classes in a very traditional manner. However, he occasionally sets up racially and sexually integrated committees to perform joint projects such as making maps. Students often resist his efforts to set up these committees both because it makes it difficult for them to sit with their friends and because some students feel it impedes their academic progress.

> The tables are set up for committee work today. At one table sit David, Howard and Keith the only white males in the class today. Five of the six black males present are sitting together at another table. The sixth is sitting at a table with a black female. Two white girls and two black girls are seated at the only racially mixed table. Another table seats five black girls... Mr. James announces a committee consisting of Eric (black), Fred (black), Howard (white), Stacey (black) and Leona (black). Howard says, "I don't get along with any of them..." There are continued complaints from numerous children about the committee assignments. Mr. James says, "What's involved in a committee assignment? Am I asking you to hold hands? You don't even have to work together except to stand up and give a report." Howard and David object to being split up. Mr. James says, "You two have always been together." They answer, "And, we've done good work too." Mr. James replies, "I'm not arguing with that. I need you separate this time." Now Mr. James has the committees go to their assigned tables. Howard sits with Sonya (black), Dave (white), Ted (black) and Lilian (black). Ted says sharply, "Mr. James, get him out of here. He doesn't belong here." Howard replies to Ted, "I know where I belong." Mr. James asks Howard to move. He objects. Mr James says, "Howard, are you telling me you can only work with one person (referring to Dave)? I'm going to have to talk to your parents about this." As they argue Howard has moved so he's standing by the table where Lauri (white) now sits alone. Howard says, "You said we could work alone. Can't I work alone right here?" Dave grins at Lilian. He seems to be getting along quite well without Howard. Soon nowever, he moves over with Howard

> who finally sits down at Lauri's table..When class is dismissed Howard is the last one out. He appears to have been talking with Mr. James about the committee assignments. As he leaves he says in a disgruntled tone, "I come here for my own education, not for somebody else's."
> May, 1977

Wexler's principal often stresses the importance of intergroup relations in his dealings with the teachers as previously mentioned. For example, he spent most of the very first all school faculty meeting talking about the importance of TA classes.

> Mr. Reuben stated that the purpose of the TA's was to help children get to know each other and the teachers...He also made quite a lot of the fact that in his view these goals are maybe even more important than academic goals such as "learning complicated algebraic equations." He said that academic learning that was missed in sixth grade could probably be picked up later whereas social learning might never occur if it doesn't happen now. A number of teachers seated near me looked very disgruntled with Mr. Reuben's statements on this topic and made quiet derogatory remarks among themselves.
> September, 1975

However, there are strong structural forces at work at Wexler which reinforce the teachers' tendency to emphasize academics. The most obvious of these are the standardized tests in reading and mathematics which are given at the beginning and the end of each school year. The Board of Education publishes statistics from these tests on each school by grade level. When Mr. Reuben was discussing these tests with the teachers at a faculty meeting he assured them that individual teachers or teams of teachers would not be judged by the gains their students made. A teacher sitting behind me murmured to a friend, "Yea, yea. Who's going to believe that?" The school has no equivalent test to measure the development of attitudes or interaction patterns over the course of the year.

The role definitions of teachers, counselors and deans as prescribed by middle school practice in Waterford and as implemented at

Wexler are also conducive to teachers ignoring non-academic matters. Specifically, teachers are instructed to refer students who are having difficulty adjusting to the school or each other to the counselors. Furthermore, the dean, not the teacher, decides when an offense is serious enough to warrant suspension. In fact, Dean Kent told the sixth grade faculty that it was inappropriate for them even to make recommendations on the matter. In a faculty meeting in October, 1975 she stated emphatica 'It is the dean's prerogative to decide who gets suspended and who does ot." Further emphasizing the fact that teachers were of little importan n the process, she said that she would post suspensions in her office hen she has made her decisions. This means, of course, that she does ot personally let the teachers know the outcome of cases referred to he nd that teachers have to go out of their way to find out promptly about he decision. So although the teachers are often exhorted to be concerne bout the students' personal and social development, real responsibility or these aspects of the students' lives has been taken from them.

Given the personal inclination of most teachers to give top priorit o academic matters and the very real pressures in that direction from students, eir parents, school, and structural arrangements within the school, it is hardl surprising that teachers heavily emphasize academics. However, the extent of this emphasis is a bit surprising. In fact, teachers not infrequently break school rules or ignore the spirit if not the letter of school policies n their attempts to do all they can to achieve conditions that they see as conducive to the students' academic advancement. For example, Mr. Reuben, decid that, in accordance with the emphasis on non-competitiveness and individualize

instruction and grading, academic honor rolls would not be compiled. However, some teams created team honor rolls nonetheless. In addition, individual teachers sometimes created classroom honor rolls. A clear example of this is Mr. Hue's posting of the names of "Super Mathematicians" in the front of his classroom. Although the idea of monthly honor rolls for "citizenship" was discussed at meetings of the ESAA student advisory committee, no such honor roll was ever actually implemented.[15]

Teachers often objected to Mr. Reuben's insistence that classes be racially heterogeneous. Informal rearranging of classes to make them more academically homogeneous occurred on numerous occasions although teachers obviously could not let the new class be entirely racially segregated since such classes would be visually apparent to administrators. Also, teachers occasionally came up with classroom rosters which while racially mixed virtually guaranteed that the purpose behind the mixing, the improvement of intergroup relations, would not be achieved. For example, in a number of cases the children with the lowest reading levels were grouped with those with the highest. This formed classes which met the administrator's demands for racially and academically heterogeneous classes. There was a clear academic rationale for such arrangements. Teachers argued quite convincingly that the top students needed little supervision and the bottom students need the most help. Hence, by putting these groups together they could be able to free more time to work with the slower groups than would therwise have been possible. However, in considering whether or not to opt this strategy teachers were rarely if ever observed to wonder about e impact of such great academic disparity on either intergroup relations the academic motivation of the lower achieving students.

The rare teachers who did consider this aspect of the situation almost without exception decided that practices designed to improve academic achievement were warranted and were likely to succeed in spite of the potential personal and social problems they entailed. Mr. Little's team regrouped their students in February of the school's first year on the basis of reading test scores. They decided to have large classes for the highest achievers and smaller classes for the slower children so that teachers could give these students more individual attention. The two "top" classes consisted of 64 children 11 of whom were black. The "bottom" class of 18 had only two white students in it. Mr. Little commented on the new class groupings in the following way.

> I have mixed emotions. I can see where it has drawbacks... I guess we are saying that if we want to be teachers we have to try to give them the best academic life we can...There are a lot of drawbacks socially and there is going to be a stigma attached. I found that it hurts the (lower achieving) kids for a while. After a while it doesn't if you sit down and tell them why it is done. They know they can't read. They know they are slow. Most kids will admit it and I just hope the other kids are compassionate enough not to really get on them...
>
> February, 1976

The Natural Progression Assumption

The foregoing was not meant to imply that teachers in any way actively attempt to subvert the basically integrationist goals of the principal. Rather, other considerations, especially academic considerations, are so vitally important in their thinking that other goals just tend to be ignored. It is important to note, too, that the large majority of the teachers make what I will call the natural progression assumption. Teachers operating on this assumption tend to believe that mere contact in and of itself, will bring about improved intergroup relations.

Hence, they see little need to set about structuring their classes in a way specifically designed to promote positive relations. Ms. Nobel, a white math teacher, states this point of view clearly.

Interviewer: Do you think that the relations between black and white children will improve naturally as they spend more time together or do you think that specific things have to be done to push them together or to make them get along better?

Ms. Nobel: I don't know if you can do anything to make them (get together)...I don't think it's something you can force...I think it will come in due time...Nobody can be forced to go with...if they are they will be negative...So I think forcing them into a situation is not good. I think it has to be free and I've already seen some that the blacks and whites have gotten together...they are doing things together on their own now. They didn't know each other in the beginning of the school year. So, that was done very naturally...There isn't going to be a race problem.

March, 1976

Mr. Hue shares the majority view as expressed by Ms. Nobel. In response to the question asked above of Ms. Nobel, Mr. Hue says,

Mr. Hue: I think it (black-white relations) will improve... You know the ones that talk and have classes together are going to play together...

Interviewer: Do you feel that specific things should...be done to encourage students to mix more?

Mr. Hue: No, I don't.

March, 1976

It is interesting that two of the three teachers who disagree at all with the majority view are black women, Ms. Ireland and Ms. Partridge.

Interviewer: Do you think that relations between black and white kids naturally become more positive as they spend time together or do specific things have to be done to encourage them...

Ms. Partridge: I think they do need some planning. Some of these things will normally happen but if more things were planned to bring the races closer I think we'd get there quicker because with some of the students you'll never even get them together unless things are planned to force them together.

June, 1977

However, even Ms. Partridge's stand is a bit equivocal on whether time itself brings change.

> Interviewer: Last year...the students were attending a desegregated school for the first time; whereas this year's seventh graders all have had at least a year in desegregated classrooms. Do you see that as making any difference in how they get along?
>
> Ms. Partridge: It should be that they should be doing a better job of getting along since this is their second year, whereas last year was the first.
>
> June, 1977

In addition to making the assumption of natural progression many teachers hesitate to try actively to encourage more intergroup interaction for two reasons. First, a number of teachers argue that strenuous efforts to promote new friendships generally involve the disruption of old friendships. They feel that the students will not tolerate this and that any really vigorous efforts to promote intergroup interaction will backfire by creating what Ms. Nobel refers to above as a "negative attitude." In essence, this is a "backlash" hypothesis. The desire of students to preserve autonomy in their choice of seating and working partners is obvious in the previous excerpt from field notes on Mr. James' class (p.89). An even more striking example follows.

> After the meeting I talked with George about the boycott in Mr. Count's class. He said that Mr. Count had changed the seating pattern in his class because there was too much noise and problem behavior. He changed the pattern in a way which broke up friendship groups. Since friendship groups are largely segregated, the new seating pattern was much more integrated. The students were unhappy with the new situation and decided to boycott the class. They came to it but wouldn't answer when Mr. Count would ask a question or call on someone. There was a lot of nudging, elbowing and giggling. Children who had been called on would stall or in most cases say they didn't know the answer. It became apparent quickly to Mr. Count that something was going on. He asked what was the matter and the students told him they wanted to sit in their old seats. Mr. Count

> decided to let the students go back to their old seats if they would keep the noise and problem behavior down. The students agreed and were allowed to return to their old seats.
>
> May, 1976

ıe few teachers who do consciously try to increase intergroup interaction

e forced to find subtle ways of doing so which won't create strong

/chological resistance or outright revolt. Mr. Little says:

> I don't think you can push kids to socialize (when) they don't want to. I think it is going to cause problems...I try to do it in different ways, but I don't think the kids know it is happening. I think you can pull some tricks on them...It is just basically a matter of moving tables around and to do their work...they have to sit there and talk...Some of the social studies book is so difficult that they have to work together. They have to depend on each other.
>
> February, 1976

Although most teachers strongly believe that increasingly positive

ions will gradually evolve between black and white students, they

see very clearly that the academic gap between the average white

in the school and the average black child poses a major impediment

s process. Indeed, when most teachers are asked to think in detail

their ideas on natural progression they seem to qualify their initial

on that blacks and whites in general will interact more positively

ime. Rather, they take the position that positive relations

aturally develop between black and white children from roughly similar

ackgrounds and with roughly similar personalities or levels of

ic performance. Given the major class differences between the whites

e blacks in the school, this sort of natural progression implies a

ifferent overall outcome of interracial schooling than a natural

ssion which operates in spite of class and school performance

arriers. Interestingly, a number of teachers seem to feel it is

inappropriate for them to try to foster strong positive relations between children who are very different.

> Ms. Wire: I don't like the idea of having a power to influence people to the point where they would become friends...I mean, (it's OK to) point out people that have common interests or similar personalities...But I realy...just wouldn't want to be the person to fix up a friendship... You could say, "You collect stamps and so and so does too " or something like that. But beyond that I wouldn't feel comfortable.
>
> March, 1976

Others like Ms. O'Hara believe that efforts to foster positive relations between very different types of children are sure to fail and are also inappropriate.

> Kids, no matter how you plan (aren't) going to change their minds because you say so...Therefore, let things run their natural course and kids will get along. The kids that are good will loaf with those that are good, kids that are mischievous and rotten will loaf together too. To mix them up would be defeating the purpose of life.
>
> March, 1976

The colorblind perspective. Wexler's faculty tend to subscribe to what Wist (1974) has called a "color-blind" view of interracial schooling. This perspective sees interracial schooling as an opportunity for class assimilation. The purpose of schooling as seen from this perspective is to give all children a fair chance to learn the skills necessary for success in a basically middle class society. Black staff members at Wexler generally appear to share this view with their white colleagues as the following excerpt from an interview with Dean Kent shows.

> I really don't address myself to group differences when I am dealing with youngsters...I try to treat youngsters,

I don't care who they are, as youngsters and not as black, white, green, or yellow...Children are children and they're trying to adjust to a situation and sometimes they don't know how to...Many of the black youngsters who have difficulty are the ones who...have come from communities where they had to put up certain defenses and these defenses are the antithesis of the normal situation...like they find in school. It is therefore (difficult) getting them to become aware that they have to follow these rules because (they) are here...not over there in their community...I think that many of the youngsters (from the) larger community have a more normal set of values that people generally want to see, and therefore do not have (as) much difficulty in coping with their school situation as do our black youngsters..."

(the black children) do have difficulty in adjusting because they are just not used to it. Until we can adjustively counsel them into the right types of behavior...I think we're going to continue to have these types of problems...

April, 1976

r. Don, a white Language Arts teacher, comments:

I think everyone needs to read, to speak, and to try to write correctly. You can talk Polish at home, or ghetto language in the street...but when you are out there in the world you have to be able to read and write what everyone else does, the majority. That happens to be English and that happens to be... spoken by the majority which is white...That's just the way it is...
The curriculum, I think, should...have materials so I can work with the lower kid whether he is black or white...

March 17, 1976

From the color-blind perspective it is unfair or at least inappro-

to bring up race, since race is essentially irrelevant to one's

d the opportunities which should be provided. Even taking note

o is seen as an indication of possible prejudice.

en I was arranging the student interviews I mentioned to Mr. Little at I thought there was only one white girl in one of his classes. asked if I was right about this and he said, "Well, just a ute. Let me check." After looking through the class roster his roll book he said, "You know, you're right. I never iced that...I guess that's a good thing."

November, 1976

Both black and white faculty members tend to agree that race should not be used as a sorting or selection criteria even if it is only one of the various criteria used. For example, a white faculty member complained rather bitterly to me that a black faculty member had been made a team leader because of her race. He said she was qualified to serve in this capacity but no better qualified than whites who had been passed over. Similarly, a black faculty member had a continuing battle with Ms. Fowler, the social worker in charge of the DA's and the after school activities, because his highly visible and well-regarded media crew consisted entirely of white males even though a wide variety of students had applied for membership. Ms. Fowler argued that even if other types of students required more training they should be included. Mr. Williams the media crew advisor, vehemently argued that he needed the best qualified group and that these students happened to be white males. Mr. Williams gave in only after Ms. Fowler, who controlled the funds for the extra-curricular and summer activities, said he had to choose between changing the media crew membership and loosing all financial support for his special projects.

As is apparent, the staff at Wexler is facing many of the complex issues raised by the Bakke case which is now under consideration by the Supreme Court. In general, the principal at Wexler seems much more likely to consider race a valid consideration in planning and decision-making than do other administrators on the faculty. Perhaps one reason for this is that one of the principal's major areas of responsibility and concern is the school's relations with the external world. He needs statistics to show the school is treating blacks and whites fairly and he needs a school which to the casual visitor for the outside looks racially balanced.

The teachers, on the other hand, are more concerned with how effectively they can produce excellence in academic or other pursuits. So, for them, race seems like a totally irrelevant criteria.

The teachers' tendency to see race as a completely irrelevant aspect of an individual is reinforced by their perception that most children share this viewpoint. Thus, teachers argue, bringing up race or considering it will only create problems by raising a potentially volatile issue that is not otherwise a real factor.

Ms. Monroe: You know, I hear the things the students usually fight about. As I said before, it's stupid things like someone taking a pencil. It's not because (the other person) is black or white... At this age level...I don't think it's black or white.

Interviewer: There's something I'm wondering about. It is hard to believe, given the way our society is, that you can just bring kids together and they won't be very much aware--

Ms. Monroe: They just go about their daily things and don't.. I don't think they think about it really...I see them interacting with one another on an adult basis... They are not really aware of color...or race or whatever. I really don't think they are.

Interviewer: You really don't see that as a factor...in their relationships?

Ms. Monroe: No.

Although the students rarely make overt reference to race in classroom situations, there does seem to be clear evidence that contrary to the teachers' view it is a very real factor in children's perceptions of each other. The persistence of very pronounced racial separation in the lunchroom is one such piece of evidence. Also, in our interviews with both white and black students it became clear that race is clearly recognized as a factor which generally has some impact on students' relationships.

Interviewer. Can you tell me who some of your friends are?
Beverly(black):Well, Stacey and Lydia and Amy.even though she's white.

May, 1976[16]

Interviewer: How friendly do you think kids are here at Wexler?
Margie(white):The white kids or the black kids?

May, 1976

Finally, an excerpt from our field notes shows how acutely aware of race some children are.

> Mr. James explained to me a regrouping of classes in his team which made them more academically homogeneous...He said that the white kids in the slowest group complained. He said that a white girl was the ringleader but that a number of white boys went along with her. He went on to say that the white students were so upset that the teachers had to have a meeting with them. The teachers explained that students were grouped by achievement levels. He said after the explanation some of the white kids said everything was OK. But Nicki was very upset...Her father came in and talked with Mr. Reuben who said that a change would be made in the black/white ratio in the class...(Later) Howard, a white male, leaned over to me and said, "You know, it just wasn't fair the way they set up this class. There are 16 black kids and only nine white kids. I can't learn in here." I said, "Why is that?" Howard replied, "They copy and they pick on you. It just isn't fair..."
>
> October, 1976

The Taboo

The three factors discussed above, the academics first orientation, the assumption of natural progression and the colorblind perspective all appear to have contributed to the development of a fascinating phenomena which has had a major impact on the way that social relations between black and white students at Wexler have developed. This phenomenon is the development of a norm, strong enough to be called a taboo, which forbids Wexler's students and staff from directly making reference to, let alone discussing, the fact that blacks and whites exist in this country as relatively distinct social groups. Since this norm appears to

be quite important in effecting relationships within the school I will devote a substantial part of this section of the report to (a) presenting the evidence for the taboo's existence, (b) analyzing why and how the taboo developed and was adopted by students and faculty alike, and (c) exploring the consequences of the taboo's development.

It is truly astonishing how rarely Wexler's administrators, faculty and students refer to race when they interact with each other. For example, during the school's first year, we observed over 30 hours of teacher-teacher and teacher-administrator interaction. In that entire time school personnel spontaneously made fewer than ten direct references to race. Any use of the word black or white in a context in which it refers to an individual or group was classified as a reference to race. So, for example, the statements, "This school has a 50/50 black white ratio" or "Jane plays mainly with other white kids" were considered references to race. Racial epithets as well as words used almost exclusively within one group to express solidarity (Hey, Brother) were also considered references to race.

The extremely infrequent reference to race is all the more surprising when one considers that our observations include a wide variety of formal and informal faculty meetings and discussions as well as a summer pre-service training program designed to prepare the teachers to function effectively at Wexler. Even more striking is the fact that reference to race was literally never once made in either the workshop on T.A. classes, the affective education classes whose purpose is to help students come to know and appreciate others, or in workshops on class-room management funded by the Emergency School Assistance Act. Similarly, mention of race was extraordinarily infrequent in teacher-student and

administrator-student interaction. In over 150 hours of classroom observation during the study's first year there were only 14 references to race. One of these references is a P.A. announcement made by the sixth grade dean, Dean Kent, on the morning of the very first day of school.

> There are many different people in this school: black, white, oriental Spanish speaking, and some with handicaps. There is no rhyme or reason why any of you should bother others because they are different. If you can't act right there are lots of other kids who want to come to this school...Enough said!
> September, 1975

This announcement typifies the attitude of teachers and administrators to racial issues in two important ways. First, the statement makes it quite clear that students are expected to get along with others who may be different. Difference in background is not seen as a legitimate reason for negative behavior. Second, and perhaps equally important, is the Dean's use of the phrase "Enough said!" She implies that it is unnecessary and perhaps even inappropriate for more to be said about racial or other differences between students. She lets it be known that she expects students to get down to the business of learning without further ado over the fact that interracial education is a new and perhaps frightening experience for most children.

The teachers certainly followed the Dean's lead. For example, teachers made no reference to race in any of the four T.A. groups we observed watching "Conrack", a movie about a white teacher who defies both white and black administrators to teach an isolated group of rural black children as he sees fit. Mr. Little told me that although he was careful to include black figures like George Washington Carver in homework assignments on "Great Americans" he did not mention the fact that they

were black in class. Mr. Little discussed the concept of America as a "Melting Pot" in his Social Studies class.

> Mr. Little then asks, "Who knows whose birthday it was yesterday?" Alice (white) answers correctly, "The Statue of Liberty's birthday..." Mr. Little spends the next five minutes explaining the "Melting Pot" in America. Alice offers some descriptive evidence about her grandmother and Humphry (white) mentions the theory that Indians were not really natives of this country. Mr. Little tells a story about the grandmother of one of the teachers at Wexler who had come over from Greece. Jane (white) and Alice both want to know who it is. Mr. Little says he can't tell. Robert (white) says, "Could you tell us what team she's on?" and Mr. Little replies, "No!"
>
> October, 1975

It is noteworthy that Mr. Little made no reference to the way in which the black experience calls into question the Melting Pot theory as well as that no black children participated in the discussion. Also of note is the fact that in discussing the various classes of people in Roman society Mr. Little mentioned the nobles and the plebians but omitted all reference to the slaves. Ms. O'Hara makes it clear that she feels reference to race is, at least under some circumstances, completely inappropriate.

> Interviewer: Do you feel it's best to openly deal with the fact that some black and white kids aren't used to each other and that they may have fears about each other, or is it better to watch things run their natural course without bringing up the fact that race is a factor?
>
> Ms. O'Hara: Leaving it run its natural course, period! No other comment on that!
>
> March, 1976

The strength of the teachers' resistance to confronting the issue of race directly is well illustrated by some events which occurred in the spring of the school's first year. A local foundation sponsored two clinical psychologists, one white and one black, who were made available to consult with teachers about problems between children. The foundation is

particularly concerned with racism and felt that the consultants could assist teachers both by helping them to handle problems between children and by helping them to analyze the effect of their own practices on the children. The consultants spent the fall term in a very traditional clinical role helping teachers with children who posed behavior problems. In the spring, the consultants proposed a mini-course for teachers to help them explore issues raised by the interracial nature of the student body. The teachers were generally very unenthusiastic about the course. However, Mr. Reuben felt it had the potential for being very useful. So he decided that teachers would be required to attend six sessions of about one hour each run by the consultants. The sessions were held during the school day in the time slots teachers normally have free for planning and grading papers. Separate sessions of the course were held for each team, although occasionally the deans or the counselors joined these team sessions. I was able to attend five of the six meetings of the course for a team I worked with in the sixth grade. The teachers' resistance to discussing racial issues is apparent in the field notes below. In this early session of the mini-course the group leader was trying to administer an attitude questionnaire which he hoped to give near the beginning and the end of the six session mini-course to see if any change had occurred. The questionnaire concerned racial attitudes.

> One of the questions which stirred much comment read as follows, "You're walking down a street alone and must pass a corner where five young men are loitering." (Some forms of the questionnaires said five young black men, others didn't specify race, etc.) Teachers were supposed to check various answers to indicate how they would feel in this situation. Ms. Nobel reading one pair of options says, "Feel whiter, feel black? That is ridiculous!" Mr. Jones says, "Maybe it isn't so ridiculous. I think it's asking whether you're more conscious of your race then than you would be at another time." The teachers generally disagree with

> Mr. Jones. The teacher's aide says, "How can anyone feel whiter or blacker? I'm black and I am as black as I can be. And you," she said pointing to Mr. Handlin, the clinical psychologist, "Are as white as you can be. How can anyone feel blacker or whiter?" Mr. Count makes a little joke saying, "Maybe you could dip someone in white paint." Nobody laughs much. Ms. Doug cuts in angrily, "I think this is just plain ridiculous. How could it make you feel whiter?" Mr. Count tries again. He says, "If we turned out the lights we'd all be blacker." This time there is general laughter. Ms. Doug then says, "This questionnaire tells me a lot about the person who made it up. It doesn't tell you anything about me. The person who made it up is SICK!" The teachers chorus rather loudly, "Yeah, sick!"
>
> April, 1976

One could argue that the teachers' resistance to the questionnaires is just an outgrowth of their rather natural resentment of an "outside expert" who is asking questions in a sensitive area. After all, the administration of the questionnaire did imply that Mr. Handlin expected to find different reactions to situations depending on the race of the individuals involved. However, the teachers' resistance to discussing race continued in later sessions when the element of personal insult or threat was not so clearly present. For example, in one session of the course which was designed to explore children's reactions to differences between peers, the teachers discussed students reactions to fat children and to handicapped children at some length. However, in spite of Mr. Handlin's efforts to steer them in that direction, they did not discuss white and black students' reactions to each other. The resistance is also apparent in field notes from another session which was filled with long tense silence whenever issues even verging on race were introduced.

> Mr. Handlin starts the session by writing on the board, "Wexler as a model of integration and education." He then underlines

the words integration and education and says, "A lot of people, at least people on the outside of Wexler see the school as a model of integration and education. I'd like to talk with you today about some of the things that you need in order to achieve these goals...What sorts of things do you need to meet these goals?" Ms. Nobel says immediately, "We need consistency...We have to be fair--we have to treat each child the same way..." (A discussion of consistency follows). Mr. Handlin says, "OK, what else do you need to achieve these goals?" Ms. Wire says in a low rather humorous tone, "The upper hand." (There is a lengthy discussion of the teacher's desire to control the students). Ms. Nobel says, "We need (curriculum) materials and good access to them." (For the next 20 minutes the teachers discuss (a) the importance of parental support for the teachers, (b) the desirability of small class size and (c) problems teachers encounter in interpreting grades to parents). Mr. Handlin says, "Well, now I notice that almost everything you've mentioned so far has been concerned with Wexler as a model for education. But what about the school as a model for integration?" Ms. Wire says, "It's really unrealistic to see Wexler as a model of integration because its open enrollment...That changes everything." George replies, "OK, open enrollment. Maybe open enrollment is one thing that would make integration work." After writing open enrollment on the board he asks. "What else would be important?" There was a silence longer than the other silences in the meeting so far. None of the teachers looks ready to respond. Dean Kent breaks the silence saying, "One big problem that we have is the different school backgrounds the kids come from (She and Mr. Handlin discuss the problems with the educational programs in ghetto schools at some length. No one else participates). The Dean ends her summary of her comments by saying, "You get into real academic and social problems when you have these black kids who've come from a very inconsistent educational program coming to an integrated school were the norms are different. (Mr. Handlin asks the Dean to expand her comments on community norms). The Dean says, "Well, different communities have different norms and when kids are brought together it's important that they understand each other." No one else seems about to comment on this or take up the topic so Mr. Handlin says, "Do you teachers feel you have a pretty good handle on what the different norms in different communities are?" Ms. Wire replies, "Well, I can't possibly get to know 135 kids really well. The way a middle school is set up is you just plain can't get to know the background of each individual child." Here she is clearly switching the conversation from a discussion of group norms to a discussion of individual children's values, attitudes and backgrounds. A number of teachers respond to her statement, all agreeing with it and expanding on it. Mr. Little says, "You know, I'm not really sure there are community norms that are important."

April, 1976

Interestingly, in the sixth grade house's resentment about the course was so great that the Dean set up a committee to evaluate the course. Mr. Handlin told me about it.

> He said that the Dean met with him and with five building representatives (An elected group of teachers who carry their constituents'concerns to administrators). He said the Dean nad five pages of questions that she wanted answered and that she really grilled them. The Dean had taken a survey with questions on it like, "Did you find he pushed you into saying things you didn't want to... (I should note I have not seen a copy of the survey so I do not have independent confirmation of Handlin's view of the situation although I do know from other sources that a review committee was set up).
>
> April, 1976

Students, as well as teachers and administrators, make racial references quite rarely. As mentioned previously, in the over 150 hours of observation of students during the study's first year fewer than 15 references to race were recorded. These references include things as oblique as one black girl calling another rather heavy black girl "Aunt Jemima." The obvious question which arises is whether race is truly an almost taboo subject or whether the researchers have somehow failed to pick up references which are made. Teachers certainly agree with the researchers' perception that race is very rarely mentioned by students. A fairly typical statement comes from an interview on the subject of student fights with Ms. Wire, a white Language Arts teacher. Although the discussion is about racial reference in a negative context, other teachers' remarks about racial reference in a neutral or positive contexts are similar.

Interviewer:	When problems between black and white kids arise... what percent of the time do you see them as having anything to do with race...?
Ms. Wire:	I've seen it happen very rarely.
Interviewer:	Well, now, if something...starts in a totally non-race related way, have you seen cases where...kids will start calling each other racial names...?
Ms. Wire:	I haven't heard it at all.

Interviewer: You know, occasionally I've heard Lisa (white) make remarks about black kids...Are there many other kids, either white or black, who do that sort of thing?

Ms. Wire: Lisa is...the only...She's like the only person I've heard.

March, 1976

Ms. Miller agrees with Ms. Wire's assessment of the situation.

> I haven't heard any name calling as far as racial lines go. There's only three kids that I can think of that do that... Otherwise, they just go about their daily things...Last year (at another school) kids were more conscious of color...They would fight a white person just because it was a white person and I haven't seen that here.
>
> March, 1976

Students'awareness of the taboo is shown clearly in the following field notes which recount a conversation with a white social worker who runs the club and after school program at Wexler. She is one of the very few adults at the school who ever spontaneously mentions race. It is significant that she is not a regular school employee. Her position is funded by a local foundation which is concerned with race relations.

> Ms. Fowler said that a short while ago she had heard from Martin (black) that another child had done something wrong. The offense was serious enough so that she wanted to track down this individual. She asked Martin to describe the child who had committed the offense. Martin said, "He has black hair and he's fairly tall." He didn't give the race of the other person even though he went on to give a fairly complete description otherwise. Finally, Ms. Fowler asked, "Is he black or white?" Martin replied, "Is it all right for me to say?" Ms. Fowler said that it was all right, that black or white skin is a matter of fact and an important part of a physical description. Martin then said, "Well, the boy was white."
>
> November, 1975

Students themselves maintain that actual references to race are rare, especially when teachers are around.

Interviewer: You know the other day I was walking around the school and heard a sixth grade student describing a student from the seventh grade house to a

teacher who needed to find this student in order to return something she had lost. The sixth grader said the seventh grader was tall and thin. She described what the girl had been wearing and said her hair was dark, but she didn't say whether the girl was black or white...Why do you think she didn't mention that?

Sylvia(black): The teacher might have got mad if she said whether she was white or black.

Interviewer: Do some teachers get mad about things like that?

Sylvia: Some do.

Interviewer: How do they react...?

Sylvia: They just holler...

Interviewer: How do you think the teacher would have reacted if the student said whether the seventh grader was white or black?

Sylvia: Not harshly if she was helping to find her purse...

Interviewer: Now when you talk to kids who are black, do you ever mention that someone is white or black?

Sylvia: No.

Interviewer: What about when you're talking with kids who are white?

Sylvia: Nope.

Interviewer: You never mention race? Why not?

Sylvia: They might think I'm prejudiced.

June, 1976

Interviewer: You said that sometimes black kids might not like someone in mentioning group memberships by saying things like black or white. Have you actually seen cases like this...where black kids have been angry about it or

Sue(white): Yeah, I've seen that. It's, I don't like...I don't know why, but I never say black or white.

June, 1976

Interviewer: (a situation like that in Sylvia's interview p. 110, in which race wasn't mentioned is decribed). Why do you think he didn't mention whether the student was black or white?

Darin(black): Cause he didn't want to get beat up, probably. Cause if you talk color, probably they beat you up.

Interviewer: Who will beat you up?

Darin: Anybody...

Interviewer: Would you have mentioned the student's race if you were describing him to the teacher?

Darin: Yes

Interviewer: Why do you think the other student didn't?

Darin: Probably he didn't want to embarrass the other kids... and the teacher

Interviewer: How would he have embarrassed the teacher?

Darin: Well, if it was a white teacher and you said the kid was white, he (the teacher) would probably be embarrassed himself...(It would) probably embarrass the kids (too).

Interviewer: Why do you think that's so?

Darin: Well, it happens sometimes in my class.

Interviewer: Now when you talk to kids who are black do you ever mention that someone is black or white?

Darin: No, I have never (inaudible) between whites and blacks.

Interviewer: What about when you are talking with kids who are white? Do you ever mention whether someone is black or white to them?

Darin: No...I don't like talking about other races...

June, 1976

References to race remained quite rare in the study's second year. However, there did appear to be some easing of the taboo. For example, we noted more than twice as many references to race per hour of observation in the study's second year compared to its first. Unfortunately, it is difficult to know whether this apparent change was one which occurred throughout the school or whether it was due to the fact that different teachers were observed in the study's two years. There was some indication, however, that the taboo did actually lessen somewhat over time.

Interviewer: Do you think a fight between a black and a white should be handled any differently than one between two kids of the same race?

Mr. Little: Hopefully not...I probably wouldn't have said anything about being black or white...You know, there is a thing...when we were talking in class about a person who was black...I was sort of hesitant wondering what reaction it would bring...

Interviewer: Now, let me make sure I understand what you were saying about talking in class about a person who is black. If you were talking about someone like George Washington Carver would you say, "He's a well-known black scientist?"

Mr. Little: In the beginning I wouldn't have. I don't know why, but I never kind of...I had a fear when I came here of what was going to happen. Now it doesn't bother me...Before I was at an all black school which was much easier. You just came out and discussed things

> like prejudice, why there is hatred between blacks and whites when they don't even know each other. It hasn't come out here yet...Maybe I haven't...Maybe I've made sure to keep it down. I really don't want to hear it, you know.
> February, 1976

Field notes from a meeting with Ms. Fowler, the school's social worker, also suggest a weakening of the taboo over time.

> I asked Ms. Fowler what impressions she had about the way things were going this year. (I was careful not to preface my questions with any remarks which might direct her thoughts in any specific type of change). The first response she made was, "I think people are more comfortable with being in an interracial environment this year. Let me tell you about an incident that illustrates what I mean." Ms. Fowler went on to relate that last week she had overheard a student trying to tell a teacher something about another teacher. The student couldn't remember the name of the teacher he was trying to describe so he described the teacher saying, "You know, he teaches social studies on team B, I think..." The teacher still wasn't sure who the student was referring to and she said very casually to the child, "Is he white or black?" The child said, "white" and after a little more discussion they figured out her name. Ms. Fowler said, "I was so amazed when I heard that. That's something that I never would have heard last year.
> October, 1976

Although the strength of the taboo appeared to moderate slightly in Wexler's second year, references to race were still quite unusual. For example, in the over 250 hours of classroom observation, teachers were observed to refer to race only five times. Students initiated such references about 30 times. Given the strong impact that race appears to have on interaction patterns at Wexler, the question of why verbal reference to race is so infrequent arises. The earlier discussion of the teachers' ideology suggests a number of reasons why the teachers might adopt a strategy of verbally ignoring race. First, since academics have such high priority in the teachers' minds, teachers rarely think seriously about social relations. Secondly, the colorblind perspective means that they tend to think it is

Inappropriate to notice or respond to children's racial group membership. Finally, the natural progression assumption tends to make teachers hesitant to do anything specific with reference to race which might upset the natural evolution of positive relationships between children. Reinforcing the tendency to avoid racial reference which flows from the teachers' ideology is that fact that teachers feel unprepared to handle the dynamics of discussing race related issues in an interracial situation.

Ms. Sharp: I have a TA period but I don't run TA. I have no training in it. You need training in it. I think you can do more damage than you can do good...If you are expected to run a TA and guidelines are set down then I think there is some obligation that a person be trained. I feel no more competency in group process than I do in aerodynamics and engineering. You wouldn't expect me to build an airplane without giving me some training in it. And I really feel that I could confuse group process more than I could enhance it quite frankly.

Interviewer: How do you use that TA period then?

Ms. Sharp: It is generally a directed study period.

March, 1976

Like Mr. Little (see p. 111), Ms. Wire discussed race related matters with her students when she taught in a black school. However, she does not do so at Wexler.

Ms. Wire: One discussion we had in a sixth grade class at Hoover was about why white shop owners are very suspicious when a group of black kids comes in. And you know someone said, "Why are all white people like that?" and someone said, "Well, Ms. Wire's white." Then the other one replied, "Yea, well she's a teacher ..." I wasn't in the category of black or white, I was in the category of teacher. I haven't had the occasion to get into discussions like that (at Wexler).

Later Ms. Wire explained her reasons for not discussing race.

Interviewer: Do you think at a place like Wexler it is best to... deal openly with the fact that black and white kids may not be used to each other...Or is it best to... just treat them like they are here and there is nothing too special about the school?

Ms. Wire: I don't know. I guess I sort of prefer the second approach...I don't know how I would handle the first approach...is probably what I am saying...I would get too bogged down in it.

March, 1976

As the above quotes suggest, race related issues are not only low priority for teachers they are threatening because teachers feel unprepared to handle them. Hence, it is not surprising that a norm forbidding references to race has evolved. This norm allows teachers to concentrate on the achievement of their highest priority goal while protecting them from situations they feel uncertain about.

In addition, the taboo allows teachers to live comfortably with facts and actions which might be open to serious question if full discussion of their implications were allowed. The taboo increased the teachers' freedom of action as well as simplifying their decisions since fewer considerations must be weighed in judging each act. Some examples may clarify these points. Recall the case of the teacher who purposely miscounted votes in the student council election (see p. 68) so that a "responsible" white boy represented her homeroom rather than an "unstable" black girl. The teacher, as far as I could tell, did not consciously consider the race of the children in making her decision. She looked at the two children as individuals and decided that one was a more desirable student council representative than the other. In reflecting on her action, she worried a bit about her subversion of the democratic process. However, she did not consider the fact that she had changed the racial composition of the student council. Hence, the existence of the taboo let the teacher do what she wanted without fear that someone might call her action racist as well as undemocratic.

Over 80% of all students suspended at Wexler are black. This is as true in the houses with black deans as it is in the house with a white dean. The "color-blindness" of the teachers is evidenced by the fact that almost one-third of the teachers interviewed denied having noticed that blacks are more frequently suspended than whites. It should be noted that the daily absence bulletin which teachers must use to take care of their attendence records always lists the names of the suspended students. The taboo insures that those teachers who have noticed the disparity will not raise potentially disruptive questions about why the suspension rates are much higher for black students than for white students.

Glaser and Strauss' (1964) work on "awareness contexts" is useful in illuminating what is occurring at Wexler and how it is similar to what occurs in social life elsewhere. By the term awareness context Glaser and Strauss (1964, 196) refer to "the total combination of what each interactant knows about the identity of the other and his own identity in the eyes of the other." Glaser and Strauss delineate several types of awareness contexts. For example, in the open context each person knows the other's true identity as well as his identity in the eyes of the other. The term identity is used here to refer to any important aspects of the person which are relevant to the interaction. People at Wexler generally seem to operate within what Glaser and Strauss have termed a pretense awareness context, that is a context where interactants know each other's identities and each other's viewsof their own identities but pretend to be aware of neither. Glaser and Strauss developed their typology of awareness contexts in studying a hospital ward. There, doctors and nurses, like the staff at Wexler, are often faced with facts which are threatening to themselves and their clients. Not knowing how to discuss a threatening sub-

ject like the approaching death of a patient they, like the teachers at Wexler, strive to structure the situation so this threatening fact about the other's identity need not be faced. However, there is one major difference between the hospital situation and Wexler. Hospital personnel being "expert" on the subject of death often are able to create a closed awareness context in which they but not the patient know about the patient's impending death. At Wexler, the threatening part of each individual's identity, their racial group membership, is clear to all. Hence, the school personnel will have a difficult time imposing an awareness context which ignores this aspect of identity unless there is reason for their clients to enter into collusion with them to allow the continued existence of the pretense context. Hence, the report will next address the important question of why the students generally appear to accept the pretense awareness context although their actions toward each other are clearly influenced by racial group membership.

Students were very unsure of themselves when they entered Wexler for the first time in September, 1975.The sixth grade students, most of whom came from small elementary schools, were faced with a very large school for over 1,500 students. Most students are bussed to Wexler from their local communities so they lose the security of a neighborhood school close to their homes. In addition, because of the open enrollment policy combined with Wexler's policy of putting students from different elementary schools together in teams, most students knew few if any of the other children in their classes. The school nurse reported that the students' anxiety and uncertainty evidenced itself in an unusually high number of small psychosomatic complaints.

Almost one-third of the 20 children interviewed about their first reactions to Wexler mentioned spontaneously that they had been scared. Also, several children mentioned feeling lost or overwhelmed because of the school's size.

Interviewer: Okay...now think back to the very first day of school here...How did you feel about the idea of coming here?

Tom (white): Scared.

Interviewer: Scared. A lot of people have said that. Why was that?

Tom: Oh, 'cause I wouldn't know a lot of the people here...I may be put in a class where I know somebody who hates my guts.

October, 1975

Interviewer: Okay, now I want you to tell me about your first day at Wexler...

Peggy (black): Well, it was all right. I came in late and I looked like a big drag, you know. My hair wasn't fixed right at all; I wasn't dressed right and I was real scared...

October, 1975

Sherif's (1961) work clearly shows that when faced with an ambiguous situation people are especially open to influence from those around them. The students at Wexler clearly faced a very ambiguous situation. They were on unfamiliar territory and,even more importantly,most were encountering an interracial school for the first time. Without established peer groups to guide them, the students were in a position to be maximally influenced by their teachers. Hence, the students may have been influenced to adopt the teachers' norms about reference to racial matters because they were in great need of a way of orienting to the situation and had no one else to depend upon. One teacher remarked in mid-September of 1975 about the unusual degree of reliance on teachers he felt the students were showing:

> Mr. Little said that the kids seem to rally around the teachers to an unusual degree. "Perhaps," he remarked, "it's the only thing they have in common."

The norm the teachers model, that of avoidance of racial reference, is obviously a "safe" solution for students. Its adoption greatly reduces the risk of inadvertently offending each other and precipitating unexpected and

undesired confrontations.

Table 8 suggests a number of interesting patterns which support the contention that students make racial references mainly in situations where the risk is minimized.[17] Although the numbers in the table cannot be interpreted as in any way giving precise frequency estimates, their patterns are so strong that a number of general conclusions seem warranted. First, it is clear that students tend to break the taboo primarily in interactions with students of their own group. So, for example, nearly 80% of the references to race made by black children to other individual students were directed to other blacks. Making racial reference within one's own group is less likely to result in offense than making such reference to an out-group for a variety of reasons. Positive reference to one's own race in the in-group situation affirms friendship and solidarity, whereas such reference made to an out-group member might seem like an invidious comparison. Negative references, too, are somewhat safer within groups since the person making the negative comment shares that group membership. Hence, in one sense, whatever is said about the other's group membership applies to the initiator of the comments as well. This is quite different from the situation in which the insult does not apply at some level to oneself as well as to the butt of the comment.

It is also clear from Table 8 that black children are more likely to make racial references than white children. In fact, in the entire two year's observation of the school, we have seen only two instances in which white students made any racial reference when in conversation with black students. White students tend to be very leary of mentioning race because they are afraid black students will respond negatively, even if no negative implication is intended.

TABLE 8

Racial References at Wexler[a]

Directed To	Initiated By			
	Student		Staff	
	black - 0 +[b]	white - 0 +	black - 0 +	white - 0 +
Students				
black	7 4 4	1	1	
small mixed group				
white	4	1	1	
Staff				
black	1			
small mixed group				1
white				4 1
Oneself	2			
Entire class or school	3 2 1	1	3	2

[a] Only references to race actually witnessed by project staff were coded. Hence, a number of references about which various informants spoke are omitted from the table. This conservative strategy was adopted since project staff made a point of noting all references which occurred in their presence. School staff were probably much more likely to selectively note or report various types of reference.

[b] References to race were coded as negative if they were meant to be derogatory or to tease or hurt others. Purely descriptive references were coded as neutral. References werecoded as positive when they appeared to affirm or assert group membership and were accompanied by signs of pride in it or at least acceptance of it.

Interviewer: Do you think the black kids would be angry if you were just describing a person (as black or white)? Think of the times that you...mentioned when black kids were unhappy or angry because someone used the word black or white...Where the words used in a nasty way or in a factual descriptive way. You know, like an "I have brown hair" way.
Sue: Just the fact (way).

June, 1976

White children tend to avoid racial reference at least partly out of fear of the consequences.

Interviewer: How often do kids make fun of the way others look or talk?

Mark (white): Pretty often.
Interviewer: What sorts of things...would they be...likely to make fun of?
Mark: (Being) white or black...Well, none of the white kids would say anything about the black kids but black kids usually say something about white kids... stuff like honky and white cracker...
Interviewer: And white kids don't do that back to the black kids?
Mark: No, cause if you called them nigger...all of them would be on you at once.

June, 1976

Keith, another white male, agrees that whites are unlikely to use racial epithets.

Interviewer: Well, when kids make fun of each other...do they often use words like honky or nigger?
Keith: Yeah...White kids don't call black kids niggers but black kids call black kids niggers. Black kids call a lot of white people honkys...

June, 1976

This pattern of more frequent reference to race among black children is also compatible with my argument that racial references are avoided because children want to play it safe. As will be discussed in following sections of the report, the black students at Wexler behave in a somewhat more physically aggressive manner than the white students. Hence, on the average, the white children have to be a bit more careful about not offending

out-group members than blacks do if they want to avoid a physical confrontation. Secondly, our society's history is such that calling others white is not likely to have the potential to injure or distress them that calling them black has traditionally had. The traditionally powerful position of whites relative to blacks means that very few white children are at all sensitive about being white and they even feel at an advantage in a white majority society which still discriminates against blacks. On the other hand, reminding a child that he or she is black may well cause pain and anger because it reminds the child that he belongs to a group which has traditionally been subordinate. Hence, black children may feel somewhat freer to try to insult whites by using racial epithets than vice-versa because the insult is less likely to hurt and is thus less likely to evoke a violent reaction.

For many students, the "safe" strategy of avoiding racial reference may have been adopted out of an active desire to get along well in addition to a desire to avoid confrontation. Obviously, the school's open enrollment policy meant that students at Wexler were likely to be relatively accepting of interracial contact. Very few students chose Wexler primarily because of its interracial nature. Most students interviewed, both black and white, mentioned Wexler's remarkable physical facilities or its innovative academic programs as their major reasons for coming. However, a number of students did give direct or indirect indication of relatively positive attitudes towards interracial schooling as the following excerpts from two interviews show. Talking about why they chose Wexler in their first interviews, students said:

Linda (black): Instead of meeting all black people you can meet some white, and some Chinese...

Alice(white): I could have gone to a private school. I tried out for it and made the test, but I told my mother I didn't want to go there. I told her that it seems to me that's where people who grow up to be snobs go.

Social Relations Among Wexler's Students

The existence and widespread acceptance of the taboo in combination with the teacher's generally colorblind perspective has meant that the black and white students at Wexler have had to work out relationships between themselves in an atmosphere which at some level denies that there is anything that really needs to be worked out. Yet, both black and white children at Wexler face a situation in which race and social class are highly correlated. This means that in addition to handling what cultural differences there are between blacks and whites, the children are in a situation which is conducive to the reinforcement of stereotypes of racial superiority and inferiority.

The Impact of Different Average Levels of Academic Achievement

There is no question that the white students at Wexler on the average perform better academically than their black classmates. Teachers and students are well aware of this fact. Mr. James notes the problem.

> One of the things that bothers me is that teachers use a reverse bell curve (in grading)...You know, I have a large number of kids getting A's, very few getting C's and a lot getting D's and E's...(Kids from) Fairmount (white) and Belleview (white) were getting the A's and B's and those from areas like Knox (black) and Trenton(black) the D's and E's. This disturbs me. I keep wondering, "Is it me? Is it the way I'm teaching...Or is it what these kids have?
>
> July, 1977

Mr. Hue, who divides each of his classes into two academic groups, also notes the correlation of race and academic achivement.

Interviewer: You mentioned that when you group by ability level that you get mainly whites in your upper group. I know that's the way it works out in the one class I have observed. In that particular class, the upper group is entirely white...Do you have...blacks...in the upper groups in some of your other classes?

Mr. Hue: Yes, I believe I have one.

March, 1976

The students seem to be at least as aware of the situation as the teachers. Sometimes differences in achievement are attributed to differences in basic intelligence and sometimes they are attributed more to motivational factors. But the fact remains that most students see whites as much stronger academically than blacks.

Interviewer: How hard do students work at Wexler compared to your old school?
Bill(black): Much harder.
Interviewer: I wonder why they do that?
Bill: The white people, I mean.
Interviewer: What about the black people?
Bill: Some of them (dubiously).
Interviewer: Why do you think the black students don't work hard?
Bill: I don't know.

A number of teachers maintain that academic competition exists primarily between the students at the very top of the class. Mr. Don clearly exemplifies this viewpoint.

Interviewer: Are the kids themselves competitive?
Mr. Don: The more motivated kids, the high type students are competitive, mostly among themselves. But the average student isn't. I haven't seen any competitiveness among the slower students...They just plow along.

Other teachers see more competitiveness, but feel it occurs primarily between children of roughly the same academic level

Ms. Short: Competition...is only very noticeable among the high students...All children want to achieve whatever their level...But I don't think (the lower achieving students) really seek to compete with one another...

Interviewer: Do students compare grades across sexual and racial group lines?
Ms. Short: Generally speaking, within their own ability group levels.

March, 1976

However, interviews with the students and our classroom observations suggest a considerable amount of competition on the part of most students. In addition our observations suggest competition between children at different levels.

> Mr. Cousins continues his rounds around the room. He stops by Barry's chair and compliments him on his work. (Barry is a black male in the slowest of the three groups in this class). He says, "Barry, that's very good. Very soon now I think I'll have to move you from group C to group B. Your work is coming along very well. I'm pleased..." Jimmy and Kenny (black males in group B) hear this and are now looking at group C and Mr. Cousins. They laugh...Jimmy says, "Barry, in our group?" He throws back his head and laughs ostentatiously.
>
> February, 1977

Interviewer: How often do students compare the grades they get on tests or report cards?
Janice (black): I'd say all the time.
Interviewer: Does everyone do it or just certain students?
Janice: Most of them do it...People, blacks and whites, keep their papers...and add up the points to see if their grade turned out right...They add their papers to show that they got 260 points and that's a D, or 300 points and that's a C.

The school makes clear efforts to minimize the visibility of group differences in performance. But the differences are frequently striking nonetheless. For example, in addition to giving awards at the end of the year for outstanding academic performance, Wexler gives awards for outstanding improvement. The regular academic awards go very disproportionately to whites. Over 60 of the 68 children who received awards for maintaining an A average as sixth graders were white. The six awards for outstanding academic improvement all went to black males. However, this hardly

balanced the group membership of students receiving academic awards.

Some black children seem delighted and challenged by the school's academic standards.

> Interviewer: Why is it harder to get good grades at Wexler:
> Kenny (black): There is more competition.
> Interviewer: Do you like competition?
> Kenny: Yes.
> Interviewer: Why?
> Kenny: It makes it more of a challenge.
> November, 1975

> Interviewer: What was your best experience here at Wexler so far?
> Carol (black): Best experience...Hm...Learning some things that you didn't learn at the old school...You learn how to do Math better and Spelling and English...they have better teachers (here).
> May, 1976

However, the larger group of black children who have difficulty competing successfully with the better prepared white students often feel threatened and resentful. The friction this can lead to is apparent in an excerpt from some field notes taken in Mr. Hue's class. Chuck is a member of the all-white "fast" group. Both Darleen and Harry are black children in the "slow" group.

> Mr. Hue starts the lesson by asking students to do a conversion problem between meters and centimeters. Chuck, a white boy, is the only child who raises his hand...He answers incorrectly. Harry says, "Oh, dumbbell!" Mr. Hue...says, "You know, I must say something. We don't call people certain adjectives here. We're here to learn and not to make fun of other people"...Darleen next notices that Mr. Hue wrote down a '1' instead of a 10 as the correct answer to the first question. She points out his error and then says, "I'm smart." (Ten minutes of notes are omitted). Darleen, having said something I didn't hear has caught Mr. Hue's wrath. He shouts at her, "I'm not paid to listen to you talk. You don't know any Math, but you talk smart. You sound dumb and ignorant. Don't you know enough to shut up?" She protests at first but he keeps telling her to shut up and eventually she quiets down. Mr. Hue then goes back to working some of the problems on the board. After about

30 seconds, Darleen who had been looking at Mr. Hue with a combination of impishness and defiance, puts her head down on her desk.

February, 1976

Because of the high prestige associated with academic achievement and the white children's dominance in the academic arena, black children sometimes feel as if they are not fully a part of the school. For example, many of Wexler's students and faculty were very excited when their Middle School Quiz Team reached the televised final round of the all city competition. However, one black girl refused to be quiet during a replay of the match on the closed circuit T.V. She muttered, clearly referring to the fact that the school's team was entirely white, "That's not Wexler School...might as well call it White School."

The advantaged academic position of the white students puts them in a strong position relative to many black students. They are able to win the teachers' and the school's approval as well as the admiration of many of their peers. In a sense, these students have a resource which they have the option of sharing or hoarding. In some cases where sharing is officially sanctioned by the teachers, such helping is legitimate. In other cases, such as certain tests, sharing is considered illegitimate, at least by school authorities. In general, children do not seem to help those who are markedly behind them academically even when such assistance is allowed. Students recognize that information is a valuable commodity and generally see no reason to part with it when the chance of recompense is small.

Mr. Little hands out the work book assignment indicating that students can work individually or in groups. (Ten minutes elapse). Amy (white) and Miriam (white) have been working very closely together on the assignment. Mark, the black male at that table, has been working by himself for the most part...Amy and Miriam are complaining that

Mark is copying their answers. Amy puts a book up in front of her answers so that Mark can't copy and she complains to Mr. Little...She says to Mark, "Will you quit it..." At another table, Sylvia (black) is talking to Susan (white) who has come over from a third table. Susan says, "If you give me number 4, I'll give you number 11." This bantering continues and another of the girls at Sylvia's table joins in trading Susan for another answer.

October, 1975

Interviewer: Do you find it hard to get someone to help you, or...

Kenny (black): Usually it's easy, 'cause you can pay them back later.

May, 1977

Occasionally, the faster students will assist others who are behind them with class assignments. Sometimes this is done on the student's own initiative. More often, it occurs in response to a teacher's request. Ms. Partridge talks about such cooperation.

Ms. Partridge: With my brighter classes, we do have students who are really bright...Balancing these classes racially (means that) there are some black students who are slower (in these classes)...These students really get along beautifully. I find that the brighter white children... are not snobby. They are really helping. There are times when I don't need to get up to assist someone because there's (one of these bright students) saying "Ok, I'll show you."

Interviewer: (This is much later in the interview than the preceeding). What types of things do you do to build good relations between black and white children?

Ms. Partridge: Well, in the very beginning I said, "OK, John, you assist Mary; she's having a problem. You're finished with that chapter. Would you please help her at this point?" (I did this) to get them to rely on themselves because we have children that are working on a higher level than some of the others...that's basically what I've been able to do. It's really little.

June, 1977

Not surprisingly, sometimes offers of assistance create anger in the child who has been singled out as needing help.

Ms. Short: A few (of the brightest white children) are exceptionally kind...I mean that in the true sense of being kind...They are understanding and often times they will say, "I'm done with my work. Would you mind if I go over and help him?" That's never done with a sense of superiority or ridicule or anything...

Interviewer: How do the kids who are offered help receive it?

Ms. Short: Sometimes they are receptive to it. Some children will not respond...They are angry and very hostile and resentful...They don't like people seeing the level of work they are doing...

March, 1976

Although Ms. Short contends that help is usually motivated by a genuine concern rather than a desire to assert superiority, it is easy to see why the child who is offered such help might feel anger or shame. Taking help from a peer is not like getting help from a teacher since the teacher's formal role is that of helper. The teacher's superiority in the field he or she teachers is widely acknowledged. However, offers of assistance from peers pose two problems. First, one must expose the level of one's present work to a peer. This, of course, is likely to be embarrassing if the other student is way ahead. Secondly, accepting an offer of help sets up an imbalanced situation which in a sense puts the person who has accepted that help under some obligation to his mentor. Exchange theory suggests that such imbalanced relationships are often unstable as well as being uncomfortable for the person who has received assistance, especially if there is little hope of his or her being able to pay for it (Blau, 1955; Homans, 1961).

The imbalance in academic achievement creates not only situations in which the children who do less well are angered or humiliated, it also creates situations which the higher achievers find annoying. First, many of the brighter students who do offer to help are mystified and angered when

their offer provokes hostility. Second, in test situations where the felt need for assistance on the part of the lower achieving students is strongest, the higher achieving students are least likely to be inclined to share information with them. The higher achieving children obviously resent attempts to copy in test situations and often take measures to prevent it even when no clear efforts to copy are being made.

> I arrived about ten minutes after Ms. Ireland's class started today. On the board are the words "Literature Test" and the students almost without exception are bent over their mimeographed sheets apparently working very hard. They are very quiet...One of the first things I notice is the striking difference in the test taking behavior of the white and the black children...Interestingly, every single one of the white children has his or her book on end in front of their papers, apparently to protect their papers from the eyes of other students. However, there is only one of the black children who did this, a black boy...(Ten minutes later) Mirian, a white girl, gets up and goes to the pencil sharpener. When she leaves her desk she moves her book from its standing position so that it now covers her paper. When she returns from the pencil sharpener, she puts the book back up on end.
>
> October, 1976

Overt friction about copying is most apparent in the surprisingly large number of situations in which the teachers have not made it clear whether sharing of information is acceptable to them or not. In cases such as this, the students who know the answers tend to want to guard them, because they have little real incentive to share them and they would rather not take a chance of incurring the teacher's wrath. The children who need the answers, on the other hand, want help and tend to see getting this help as legitimate as long as the teacher does not actively try to prevent them from doing so. The ambiguity surrounding the legitimacy of sharing information, even in test situations, is evident in the following excerpt from an interview with a teacher.

> Just recently I gave a quiz and one of my students, Don (black), who never gets an A, got one. Of course, he was showing everybody. He had the biggest smile on his face! Of course, I had to say something so everyone would hear. That makes him feel that much better...I said, "Maybe you cheated." He said, "No, I didn't." And I said, "Hey, you can get away with it, more power to you if you can get by me. I'm not going to complain. I don't care how you got the A..." It was more or less a teasing type thing...He had that A and he wanted to hear more about it.
>
> February, 1976

This lack of clarity about what is appropriate conduce is a noticeable source of friction between children, since each group tends to interpret the situation in a way most advantageous to its interests.

Non-Academic Testing

Although academic success is a clear source of status among Wexler's students, it is by no means the only source. The remarks of Don, a white boy, on popularity lay out with rather elegant simplicity the factors which are important, at least for boys.

Interviewer:	Do you think there are some kids who are more popular than others...? Kids who have lots of friends compared to others?
Don:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Who would some popular kids be?
Don:	Elvis (black), Joe (black), and Michael (white).
Interviewer:	What makes a kid popular?
Don:	Well, Elvis because he's strong, and Joe because he's in between.
Interviewer:	What do you mean by 'in between'?
Don:	Well, he's nice and powerful.
Interviewer:	Okay.
Don:	And Michael because he has brains.

The large majority of the white students come from middle class and upper middle class homes. Many are clearly oriented toward academic achievement and have had the home background and previous education which gives them a head start as the preceding section shows. In sharp contrast, the black children, who tend to come from economically disadvantaged homes and are more poorly pre-

pared academically, are also likely to be more combative physically. This difference is especially noticeable when the personal style of black and white boys is compared. To illustrate the magnitude of the difference in the physical behavior patterns of black and white males, all the field notes from observations during the study's first year were coded for various types of physically aggressive behavior. Although this is an extremely rough way to gauge behavior differences and can by no means be taken as conclusive evidence, the results are very suggestive. Black boys were observed hitting or punching each other nine times as often as white boys and boxing with each other twice as often as white boys. Actual fighting however was relatively rare in both groups and there was no appreciable difference in its frequency for blacks and whites. There were no noticeable differences between black and white girls in the frequency of hitting, boxing, or fighting behavior.[18] Black males initiated the hitting in interracial interaction just over nine times as often as whites, although black and white boys were equally likely to initiate boxing behavior. Hence, it appears that while black boys are no more likely to hit whites than they are to hit other blacks, they do tend overwhelmingly to initiate the hitting in black-white interactions.

To some extent the black boy's mildly aggressive behavior may be a reaction to academic difficulty, as some of the teachers' earlier comments suggest. (See p. 87). However, it may also be at least partially an adaptive survival strategy for children growing up in economically depressed neighborhoods. Whatever its cause, the differential behavior patterns of black and white boys appears to have had a strong impact on the development of social relations between black and white students. Inspection of Table 7 shows that, although black and white children generally agree about the amount of fighting

and intimidation that occurs, the white children, especially the white males, are more frequently afraid than the black children. The white children's fear is understandable, since the black and white children interviewed agreed overwhelmingly that whites are most frequently the objects of whatever intimidation occurs in the school.

Interviewer: So, you think there's a lot of intimidation... Do certain students bully certain others... or does everybody in general do it?
Don(black): The black students bully the white students most of the time.
Interviewer: Do the white students ever bully the black students?
Don: Not that I know of.

May, 1977

Interviewer: Do you think black or white kids are more likely to intimidate others?
Marc (white): Black kids.
Interviewer: And who do black kids intimidate, mainly whites or blacks?
Marc: Whites.
Interviewer: Who do you think white kids intimidate mainly, other whites or blacks?
Marc: Whites.

June, 1977

There appear to be a number of factors which contribute to whites being disproportionately the objects of intimidation. Jealousy, especially jealousy over whites' academic success, appears to be one factor which motivates some black children to intimidate whites. Sometimes the intimidation appears to serve primarily as an outlet for negative emotion. Less frequently, it appears to be undertaken in the pursuit of specific objectives.

Interviewer: Are there some kids who are more likely to get picked on than others?
Michele(white): Yeah...People who are real smart.

June, 1977

Interviewer: Are things at all different now between black and white kids than they were in September?
Maurice(black): Well, the teachers used not to get on white people. They'd get on blacks. Now they get on both of them.
Interviewer: Everything else stayed the same?

Maurice: Black kids be getting on them white people.
Interviewer: They do?
Maurice: Yeah, because they be jealous of what they be having.

June, 1977

Kenny(black): Certain students here are afraid of some of the students who aren't as smart...The not so smart kids make the smart ones do their work.
Interviewer: Does that go on often, or...
Kenny: It goes on now and then.

Although jealousy appears to be one cause of the intimidation of whites, another even more important factor appears to be white's reaction to intimidation. The white children, are much more likely than blacks to let themselves be taken advantage of. Often they yield when just a little resistance would save them from yielding and would establish a very different precedent for the future. The more aggressive children, both black and white, recognize an easy target when they see one.

Interviewer: Are there certain kids who are more likely to get picked on than others?
Barb(white): I think the kids that are scared to stand up to people get picked on. My friend (is an example). She's scared of people just walking past her that look strange to her...She's scared of mostly everything I could name.
Interviewer: And because she's scared all the time, kids are more likely to pick on her?
Barb: Right!

Mr. Hue has noticed the clear difference in the behavior of black and white children who are threatened or annoyed.

> I think...that usually the white kids...take more. They walk away from a fight. If a black youngster hits a white youngster, many times the white youngsters walk on away... If a white kid steps on a black kid's toes...the black usually retaliates.

March, 1976

The rather mild behavior that whites perceive as intimidation and whites' reaction to such behavior is well illustrated by an exerpt from an interview

with Ann, a white girl who frequently has similar trouble in her dealings with black children.

Interviewer: How much intimidation is there here at Wexler?
Ann: +13 (+15 reads "it happens all the time").
Interviewer: Can you describe the last time you felt intimidated by something?
Ann: It was in art class one day...Me and my girl friend had a wax thumb because we were doing batik and otherwise you get green dye all over your hands...Laura gave this thumb mold to Jane and Jane said, "Can I draw a thumbnail on it?" She drew it real lightly; she didn't poke through the wax. So, then this girl, this black girl, Leslie...wanted to see it. So she gave it to her. What could she say? If she said no she'd get beat up. So, she gave it to her and said, "Please don't dig out the thumbnail." Leslie said she wouldn't. But she kept drawing on it harder and harder and finally the nail came out. (Ann describes at some length how she and Jane asked Leslie to return the now damaged wax thumb cover). This other girl, a friend of Leslie's, was around, too. She started tearing it up...and then she said, "Here Jane, you can keep it now." And they twisted it into balls and threw it at us...So we got angry...They kept hitting us and we kept on telling them to stop... Finally, we just left. The teacher didn't even notice. We went up to Dean Clark...Leslie got suspended 'cause she always bothers me.
June, 1976

Sometimes teachers' recognize that being too sensitive or afraid is in some ways a problem that children need to learn to deal with.

Mr. Little said, "Next we have to make a listing of the children with social or emotional problems, from the most to the least abusive. There was no explanation of the purpose of the listing given. Ms. Nobel went through her record book and every time she saw the name of a child whom she felt should be considered, she would read the name out loud. (Fifteen minutes of notes omitted). Ms. Wise said, "What about Ann." One of the other teachers said, "No, she hasn't any problem." Mr. Little disagreed, "But she can't even take someone saying to her, 'I'm going to kick your butt.' She needs to be able

> to take that. She has a social problem." Another teacher queried, "What about Leslie? She's the one who dishes it out." Mr. Little replied, "No, she is OK. She can take it too." Both Ann and Leslie were added to the list.
>
> January, 1976

However, more often the unusually active or aggressive child ends up in trouble while the unusually timid child receives support and sympathy.

The white children seem to be more afraid than the black children not only because they are in reality more often the recipients of threats or of aggressive behavior but because they tend to interpret many ambiguous or even playful acts as attacks. The symbolic interactionist perspective is useful in illuminating what appears to be occurring at Wexler. This perspective argues that the meaning of acts is not necessarily inherent in them. Even knowledge of the external context in which an act occurs does not let one predict with certainty the meaning it will have. Rather, the interpretation of a piece of behavior is highly dependent on the perspective and the expectations of the perceiver (Shibutani, 1961). Black boys do appear to initiate considerably more mildly aggressive physical activity than whites. However, this difference in and of itself does not seem enough to account for the very large disparity between these students in their rating of how friendly students are. Rather, it is crucial to examine the children's perceptions about what their interaction signifies.

Black and white children seem to differ in the way they interpret various levels of physical contact. White children appear predisposed to see ambiguous physical contact situations as dangerous or as motivated by an intent to annoy or intimidate. Dean Kent's comments support this observation.

> I noticed(that in the fall) a lot of black youngsters used to touch white youngsters' hair, and just feel it. Probably the

> little white girls would become angry and start crying...(They) didn't know how to take this. Now some of them do.
> April, 1976

Ms. Fowler tells of a somewhat similar situation in which a white child experiences physical contact in the hall as intimidation even though in Ms. Fowler judgment it is not intended as such.

> Ms. Fowler (a white social worker) went on to say that within the last month one concerned white mother called her up to talk about the school. The mother said, "My son says that a good day at Wexler is a day when there is no intimidation!" The mother was shocked by the statement and very upset by it. She had asked the child what sort of intimidation was encountered and the child said "mainly pushing and shoving and sometimes hitting out in the halls." The child also said that black children were almost always the initiators of such intimidation...The mother herself said that from the child's description of the incidents, she was unable to tell whether they were really meant as intimidation or not. Ms. Fowler (who spends much of her day in the hallways) said that she felt that much of the pushing or hitting was not meant as intimidation, but that the child just wanted the other person out of his way and would barge through without meaning to scare anyone...I myself was once almost literally knocked over by a rather large black child who was pursuing another black male up the ramp. I'm sure the child gave no thought to the fact that he bumped into me. He was intensely occupied with catching up with his companion. However, the bump rather hurt. If one were anxious or fearful of intimidation one might easily have interpreted my experience as an instance of it.
> March, 1976

The fear that many white children at Wexler have of blacks is apparent in their reactions to relatively mild and playful dominance behavior on the part of blacks. This is well illustrated in the following field notes on an encounter between Greg, a large black child, and Saul, a white boy. Saul, slender and very quiet, wears glasses and is the most intellectually oriented child in Ms. Monroe's class.

> Greg drops a small piece of wool which has come from Lydia's shawl on Saul's head. Saul ignores the fact that the wool has been put on his head and continues reading even when Greg and Martin (a heavy black like Greg) take it off and put it on a couple of times. Martin then wanders over to where Len, a white boy, is sitting alone

> as Saul was. He puts the piece of wool on Len's head. Len puts his head down on the desk ignoring Greg...He so studiously ignores Martin that it didn't seem natural...(A few minutes later) Saul stops reading and busily spends several minutes constructing a fort out of five empty tables and nine chairs. He fits the tables together so that they form a solid circular wall around him and leaves just enough room for him inside the circle. Then to make it even more impenetrable, he brings up nine chairs, putting about 2 chairs at each of five tables in order to block off the only way you can enter the center part which is, of course, by crawling underneath the tables. He then goes and just sits inside of this fortress very quietly. No one reacts immediately. However, before too many minutes have passed, Martin comes and sits at one of the chairs facing the boy at the center of the table. Then Dick, a white boy, comes over and sits in another of the chairs. These two kids start to dismantle the fort, saying, "Hey, let's make some other arrangement." Saul acquiesces without protest and just leaves the place where he had been sitting.
>
> October, 1975

The very fear and uncertainty which predisposes white children to interpret ambiguous events as threatening or mildly threatening events as serious intimidation also feeds the spread of rumors about intimidation.

> The four white boys then went on to talk with Ms. Fowler about how black kids beat white kids up. Ms. Fowler asked if any of them had been beaten up or threatened. They said, "No." She then asked if anyone they knew well had been beaten up or threatened and again they said, "No." But they all said they had heard through friends of friends or some other tenuous connection about intimidation instances or actual fights.
>
> February, 1976

The white children seemed initially to adopt one of three major strategies in dealing with the threat they perceived from black children. One strategy employed by many children is submission. They fail to protect themselves or to call on others to do so. Many of these children are afraid to report problems to teachers because they are convinced that serious retribution would follow. Hence, they see no way out of their predicament. They are afraid to refuse and afraid to ask others to intervene on their

behalf. Jane and Ann's behavior on p.134 illustrates this sort of submission. Apparently, Leslie did not even need to make threats to get what she wanted because Ann and Jane were convinced that retribution would follow if they did not let her have what she wanted.

Another strategy, more common than submission, is a rather passive withdrawal from the situation. The child does not object. He does not overtly refuse to do what is requested. He or she just disappears.

> One of Stevenson's sneakers is on the floor when I enter the classroom today. Stevenson, a black male, says to Dave, who's white, "Pick it up." There is no response from Dave. Stevenson starts toward Dave repeating the command. Dave retreats to another part of the room. Pursuit is difficult because the tables are very close together. Stevenson... picks up the sneaker himself and sits down next to Ted (black).
> May, 1977

White children sometimes seem to take flight at the approach of black children, even if the latter approaches in a very ordinary and non-threatening manner.

> Today the class is viewing the movie, Conrack, on the closed circuit television. (Twenty-five minutes of notes omitted). Two white girls, Linda and Margie, have been seated inside a cabinet-type piece of furniture all period so far. This cabinet is near the door, as far from the TV screen as possible. They have been sitting on a shelf in this supply cabinet. The cabinet has no doors so the shelf can serve as a seat and the sides of the cabinet come out around the seats to make a rather private and protected cubby hole. Linda and Margie have been playing little hand games or sometimes just talking quietly. The video tape is now being changed so there is a lull in the action on the TV. Greg (the large black child mentioned on p. 136) wanders over to the cabinet and takes a seat. The girls immediately vacate their places and move to the floor nearby. There was room for three children in the cabinet if they had been willing to sit close to each other. But they couldn't have moved around or even wiggled much. After about three minutes the movie comes back on. Two other black boys have just joined Greg in the cabinet and another is standing nearby talking to them. The girls have moved again. One has gone to a table at which several white girls and one black girl are seated. The other has taken a very unusual position. She's sitting on the floor in a corner space which is only about two feet square. The corner is protected on three

sides. Two sides consist of the classroom's walls as they meet in a corner. The supply cabinet which juts out into the room about two feet forms the third wall. I can't help but wonder how she feels. She certainly looks very isolated. Her earlier perch was I would think considerably more comfortable and it clearly had a better view of both the TV and the classroom.

November, 1976

In addition to submitting and withdrawing white children frequently just ignore behavior by blacks which they find annoying. The act as if nothing at all has happened. In fact, they act as if the black child does not exist. Ralph Ellison's thesis that blacks are treated as "invisible" by whites seems amply borne out by the behavior of many white children at Wexler.

Jim, the new white student, walks past Richard's (black) seat on his way to his table. Richard says with reference to Jim, "He's working for once." Then Richard goes over to where Jim has sat down. He feigns a couple of punches to Jim's cheek. He may actually have made contact, but not hard. Jim makes no noticeable reaction.

February, 1977

Martin, a black male, gets up and crosses the room to the pencil sharpener. He passes behind Tim, another black boy, and makes an X on the back of Tim's shirt with his pencil. Tim turns, frowns and checks his shirt to see if the other fellow had actually written on it. He looks slightly angry. As Martin continues towards the pencil sharpener, he passes behind Tom, a white boy, and does the same thing to him that he just finished doing to Tim. Tom doesn't even turn his head. He continues sitting in his rather slouched position and ignores Tim who clearly wants to get a little bit of mischief going.

November, 1976

The strategies of submitting, withdrawing and ignoring all appear on one level to be "safe" strategies for handling a threat because they minimize the chance of overt confrontations. Yet, like the taboo against racial reference, these safe strategies are in some ways dysfunctional. Adopting these strategies, especially the strategy of submitting, appears to encourage dominant behavior on the part of the more active children. The child who

routinely submits even when the threat is minimal only reinforces the dominant behavior of the other children who they can get what they want with little or no effort. The strategy of ignoring, in addition to encouraging the more dominant children to do whatever they wish, may actually provoke more intense efforts to annoy in order to gain at least some recognition of their existence.

Gender and Interracial Interaction

Table 2 shows that at Wexler black and white boys are more likely to sit with each other at lunch than are black and white girls. The differences shown in the table are all statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level. The observations of the school staff also suggest the boys interact across racial lines more than the girls.

> Interviewer: Do you see any differences between boys and girls in the way they react specifically to the interracial situation?
>
> Dean Kent: Well, I do think that there is more camaraderie between boys so that they would be more readily able to formulate groups.
>
> April, 1976

Mr. Little's and Ms. Partridge's observations coincide with those of the Dean:

> Mr. Little: I think the girls cling together racially... At least the black girls cling together more racially than the boys. I don't notice it that much with the boys at all really...
>
> February, 1976

> Ms. Partridge: Girls are more clannish than boys are and they tend to hold onto their little groups.
>
> June, 1977

So boys interact with each other across racial lines more than the girls. The dean describes their relations as showing "camaraderie." Yet, especially near the beginning of their integrated experience, they had

widely differing perceptions of how friendly students are at Wexler as Table 9 shows.

Table 9
Mean Ratings of Friendliness
by Black and White Students, October, 1975[a]

Group	Boys	Girls
White	-1.8	5.2
Black	9.0	6.2

[a]No significant main effects. The interaction of race and sex is significant, $F(1,16) = 5.4$, $p < .05$.

Whereas black and white girls both saw the school as somewhat more friendly than their old schools, the black and white boys have markedly divergent perceptions of the situation. Black boys see Wexler as much more friendly than their old schools whereas white boys see it as slightly less friendly.

Examination of the ways in which students win status in their male and female peer groups and of the consequences this has for the quality of their interaction helps to explain the white boys' rather negative view of peer relations at Wexler in spite of their tendency to mix interracially more than girls. Academic achievement appears to be one important source of status for both boys and girls. However, other sources of status appear to differ notably in the male and female peer groups. For the girls, attractiveness to the opposite sex is very important as the following excerpt from an interview suggests.

Interviewer: Are there certain students who are more popular than others with the girls?
Ellen(white): Yes, for example, Lois.
Interviewer: Why is she so popular?
Ellen: The boys always bother her.
Interviewer: What do you mean by bother her?

Ellen: Well,...they push her in the hall and just a couple of days ago one kissed her in the hall.
October, 1975

A series of notes intercepted by a sixth grade teacher shows the girls' active interest in boys quite clearly. In the first note, sent by two black girls to two boys in their class, the boys are asked if they will be the girls' boyfriends. The note replying to this reads, "Me and Harold already got girlfriends. We ain't going to tell you their names cause you might beat them up." The girls replied with a note asking, "But when you quit them will you go with us?" The boys respond, "No." The last missive from the girls says, "We'll forget you then."

The girls' emphasis on academic achievement and attractiveness to boys means that although black and white girls may compete with each other, they don't have to interact much with each other. Neither getting good grades nor attracting boys is dependent on a students' relations with other girls. Hence, girls are able to go about their business with little incentive to get to know other girls. In fact, there is some evidence that the pursuit of boys causes some negative feelings between the black and white girls.

On the whole, the students we have observed appear to choose romantic partners from their own racial group. However, when cross-race attraction is apparent, it is almost always between white girls and black boys as the following exceprts from our field notes suggest.

> Ms. List said that the seventh grade teachers are concerned about the black girls. She said that the white girls tend to be fascinated by the black boys, who to some extent reciprocate their interest. This leaves the black girls isolated since they don't seem very interested in the white boys. She also said that much of the interest between the white girls and black boys is

expressed in a very adolescent way. She gave the example of a situation in which a white girl snatches the hat or pencil of a black boy. The teachers are concerned that such behavior might become the basis for a fight between black and white children.
November, 1975

Gary (black) comes running up to Lisa and Quinn (black) is following along with his camera. Gary grabs Lisa by putting his arm around her shoulders. She tries to get away, but before she has completely extricated herself, Quinn snaps a picture and the two boys run away laughing gleefully. Quinn says, "We've got the evidence." All of the kids are laughing very heartily...Lisa is laughing. Her face is very red. For just one moment she looked serious...and then she was laughing again.
April, 1977

Perhaps one reason why the white boys show so little positive response to black girls is that the teasing and bothering which forms a normal part of the courtship ritual in the school is perceived by some of them as a real threat. This behavior may seem especially threatening because it is incongruous with traditional sex roles.

Ms. Campbell (white) told me that her son had come home from Wexler several times complaining about the behvior of a black girl who chased him a lot. He was upset by the girl's actions and afraid. Finally, one day the girl came up to him after one of these incidents and actually said, "Hey, don't run away. I like you." Now the two of them get along pretty well.
April, 1977

The mutual interest of black boys and white girls seems, at times, to annoy the black girls. However, it rarely leads to overt fights over specific boys. Rather, the girls seem to try to gain support for their romantic activities from their own race friends, much as Gary did in the immediately preceeding example.

Although many boys began to show some overt interest in girls, especially during seventh grade, their status hierarchy seems to be much more dependent than the girls' on relations with same sex peers. (See p. 130). White and black boys quite clearly compete with each other for the highly valued

places at the top of the male dominance hierarchy which they rather systematically set about constructing. Mr. Tide, a sixth grade guidance counselor, tells of an incident that occurred in the "Time Out" room where children are sent if they become too unruly in class:

> John (white) and Greg (black) started talking in the "Time Out" room about who could "take" whomin a fight. They went through a whole list of names saying, "Well, Joe (black) can take Henry (black)..."Henry can take Jack (white)"... Bill (black) can take Martin (white) until they came to two kids who could beat a lot of others but who hadn't yet tested each other. One of these kids, Wilber (black) was in the "Time Out" room too. So, the three of them tried to leave to find the other kid for a showdown.
>
> April, 1976

The boys' interest in establishing a physical dominance hierarchy may explain why there is more interracial interaction among them than among the girls. Being the strongest white or the strongest black is hardly satisfying if one desires to establish a clear position in a racially mixed school. Hence, the boys are virtually forced to interact in order to determine who is strongest.

The boys appear to adopt what might be called "strong suit" tactics. Those with academic skills capitalize on them to win themselves respect and admiration. Those with physical strength and courage capitalize on those attributes. The following field notes from a conversation with Ms. Fowler, the social worker, illustrate how "strong suit" tactics can be used.

> Ms. Fowler then related another situation she had come across in the eighth grade house. One white male who is very intellectual was using extraordinarily complex vocabulary words in talking with some black males. One of the black males got angry although his anger wasn't explicitly directed towards the white's language. He pushed the kid and a fight started. Ms. Fowler brought them into her office and analyzed the situation for them the following way. She said, "One of you uses words very well and the other uses his fists very well." She went on to say that in the same way that the

black's use of fists or pushing could hurt the white, the white's use of such complex language might wound the black and make him feel hurt. Ms. Fowler said the students were very interested in her analysis and seemed to respond to it very well. When Ms. Fowler contacted the white's mother about the incident, the mother herself said that her son uses very complex language, especially when he wants to impress people.

March, 1976

Ms. Monroe's observation that black boys who have considerable academic difficulty are the most likely to compete fiercely in other spheres and to be unable to accept defeat in these spheres also lends weight to the idea that students follow strong suit tactics.

Ms. Monroe said that she had noticed that the children seem to have a hard time knowing how to play with each other. When I asked what she meant she said that the boys in particular always want to win and that it's very difficult for them to play together because obviously not everyone can win. Unless they win, she said, the children tend to get upset. I asked whether particular students seem to feel this more strongly than others. She said that Greg and Marvin (both rather heavy black males who do poorly academically) were the leaders of this.

October, 1976

Interestingly, the idea of strong suit tactics helps to explain the behavior of the only white girl we have observed who makes racially derogatory remarks. (See p. 109). The girl, Lisa, is handicapped by a disfiguring facial tumor. Both white and black students tend to reject her. For example, near the beginning of the year students would frequently get up and leave a table if she came over. Also, she is a poor student academically. Finally, the disfigurement means that she is not able to compete successfully for boys as the following field notes show.

Kelly (black) is teasing Ann (white). She says, "I don't like Bennet" (white). Then Quim runs to the board and after writing the names Ann and Bennet he draws a big heart around the names... Ann then writes, "Quinn and Debbie" (black), producing laughter and a groan from Quinn. Perhaps this is because Debbie who isn't in class today is very heavy. Quin then writes "Gary (black) and Lisa "(white). There is no Lisa in this class

but the kids laugh and Ricky, a white boy, says " Lisa, fat lip." The obvious reference is to the Lisa on the other team with the facial disfigurement. Quin adds the words "fat lip" to the name Lisa inside the heart. Gary shouts that the heart with his name and Lisa's must be erased. Quin then adds a cruel charicature of Lisa's face which eventually gets erased. But references to "fat lip" and laughter occur for the rest of the class period.

December, 1976

Given her academic problems and her facial disfigurement, Lisa is unable to attain status by two important routes available to white girls. In calling attention to the fact that she is white while others are black she attempts to gain status from the only advantage or "strong suit" she possesses - the traditionally superior ascribed status of whites in American society.

The Evolution of Intergroup Relations at Wexler

I argued earlier that white students tend to react to behavior which they perceive as threatening with rather passive strategies, such as withdrawing or ignoring, which are conducive to continuing racial isolation. Numerous examples of these strategies have been presented. (See pp. 134, 137). However, the white boys have not been able or willing to withdraw totally from physical competition for dominance. First, many of them are motivated to establish a favorable position, although the motivation of the ones who succeed conspicuously in the academic sphere may not be as strong as that of others. Second, even if children do not initiate such interactions themselves, they are likely to be directly challenged to compete. So, in the spring of their first year at Wexler the white sixth grade boys evolved a new strategy for dealing with the threat they felt they faced. They began to coalesce into groups with special group names, insignia, and modes of behavior. Dean Kent discusses these groups in an interview:

Dean Kent: I see the youngsters getting together in groups. I think this is normal for this age...but I see them getting together in larger groups that some people outside might characterize as gangs...One of the groups called the Mice has about 30 or 40 members...Another group that has emerged (is) called the Dogs, and I am surmising...there are about 15 or 20 youngsters (there)...I think one group may have an initiation process; the other may not...I don't think that the groups themselves have come into conflict with each other...This... is something I don't like to see started.

Interviewer: And you say the groups are integrated?

Dean Kent: Yes, some of them.

Interviewer: Are they sort of 50/50?

Dean Kent: Oh, no. They are very lightly integrated as far as I know. The Mice are very lightly integrated; the Dogs are not integrated come to think of it.

Interviewer: Are these groups only male?

Dean Kent: Yes.

Although the Dean says the Mice are "lightly integrated", other sources, both students and teachers, claim it is a white group. Also, although our information on the subject is extremely tentative, indications are that the Mice became active at Wexler somewhat before the Dogs. Signs of the groups' activitivities are manifold. The first indication came in early April, 1976.

> Marvin,(black) came up to me and he said, "Don't dogs drink in a special way?" I replied, "Well, I'm not sure but I think they drink with their tongues." Marvin says, "Yeah, I'm in a club and we all drink like dogs." He then smiles. He was clearly looking for Greg's (black) and Bob's (white) reaction to my answer...He seemed pleased when I said that dogs drink with their tongues."
>
> April, 1976

About that same time, large block letter graffiti reading "Dog Power" and "Mouse Power" appeared in chalk on the outside of the school building near the playground. Before the school put pressure on the groups by contacting parents of known group members, students wore "Dogs" t-shirts.

A number of facts about these clubs seem significant in illuminating socia relations at Wexler. The fact that the white group, the Mice, became activa

first suggests that it may have been an attempt on the part of individual white boys who felt insecure in their physical competition with the black males to band together to gain strength in numbers. Supporting this interpretation is the fact that the white boys on our interview panel all characterized these clubs spontaneously as either fighting clubs or protection clubs. In sharp contrast, only one black boy perceived the clubs in this way. The others categorized the clubs as athletic clubs or social clubs. The associations of the club names adopted by the boys seem most suggestive. One thinks of mice as scampering around only when it is safe to emerge from the protection of their small holes. They are hardly the powerful or ferocious beasts after which adolescent boys often name their groups. Also, if this is not too fanciful, mice are quite clearly associated with the word white. The name "Dogs" gives rise to a somewhat more imposing image than "Mice." However, even this name falls considerably short of inspiring terror. As a matter of fact, it is quite consistent with the black boys' generally mildly aggressive behavior.

Exerpts from the interview illustrate the very different way these clubs were perceived by black and white boys.

Interviewer: And what sort of things did the Mice do?
Mac (white): They didn't do much, except when somebody beat up one of the Mice (the white group) went after that kid and beat him up.
Interviewer: Do you remember where the club name came from?
Mac: No, well, Mathew...was going to be Mathew Mouse and I was McMouse...I don't know. It sounds better than Rat.
Interviewer: So you don't really know where the name came from?
Mac: It was just made up. It's original. I've not heard about that many mouse gangs.
Interviewer: Now were there any special clothes or symbols (for the Mice)?
Mac: No, just for the Dogs. I was gonna make 'em silk screened shirts but they didn't want it.

June, 1976

Interviewer: We were talking about the Mice and the Dogs. What sort of clubs are they?
Don (black): Well, (they) play games and everyting...
Interviewer: What kind of games?
Don: Soccer, football, baseball.
Interviewer: What else do they do?
Don: That's all...They have parties too...
Interviewer: Why do you think these groups started?
Don: Maybe 'cause people wanted to be with their friends or something.

June, 1976

Although the Dean referred to the existence of other groups, the Mice and the Dogs were clearly the two major ones operating. Most teachers were unaware of any other groups, although some students told of groups called the Cats and Rats or even the Foreign Legion. No real evidence of the existence of the other groups was found and students who gave these other clubs names were generally unable to say what type of student belonged to them.

Obviously, the existence of two fairly strong boys' clubs or gangs, one black and the other white, posed considerable potential danger to the reasonably positive relationships which had evolved over the course of Wexler's first year. The school was sufficiently concerned about the potential for problems to hold a meeting at which one of the counselors, Mr. Tide, and the principal, Mr. Reuban, spoke with the boys. The adults stressed the fact that clubs could turn into fighting gangs and that the school was concerned about their existence. The counselor volunteered to serve as an advisor to the clubs if they wanted to do things like raise money for field trips. Then students who were group members were asked to identify themselves by standing. According to student and faculty reports on this meeting, they did so. The school then took the further step of notifying parents of group members about the clubs. Dean Kent said that the school did not feel it could require that parents discourage the clubs. However, school staff hoped to undermine the

clubs by persuading the parents of the potential dangers associated with such clubs.

Apparently the school's efforts to break up the clubs was successful. In their interviews during the school's second year, students unanimously agreed that the clubs had ceased to function.

Interviewer:	One thing we discussed last year was the clubs like the Mice and the Dogs. Are these clubs still active?
Norman(black):	No, there's no clubs like that (this year).
Interviewer:	Do people ever talk about them?
Norman:	Not since Mr. Reuben told them not to.
Interviewer:	Oh, so that is why they fell apart?
Norman:	Yeah, I guess so.
Interviewer:	What did he say? Do you remember?
Norman:	He said if you had a gang you might end up having gang fights and stuff like that.
Interviewer:	So he tried to discourage the clubs...Do you think the students resented it, or did they go along with him?
Norman:	They went along with him because there's no clubs now.

May, 1977

The school did avert a potential hazard by undermining the clubs. However, without realizing it, the school also destroyed the mechanism that the white boys had developed to handle what they perceived to be a real threat. Operating in an environment which virtually assumed positive intergroup relations and which almost outlawed discussion of problems which the children perceived as racial in nature, the white boys turned inward to their peers for support.

Interestingly, Ms. Ireland, a teacher on one of the two teams we observed in the seventh grade, became concerned enough about relations between black and white children to take active and very effective steps to improve them. She was the moving force behind setting up a student council for her team. This student council was unusual in a number of ways. First, anyone who wanted

could be a member since the meetings were held during the in-school D.A. (club) periods. Second, the student council was concerned not only with governance issues but took an extremely active role in planning all sorts of events and activities including a dance, a skating party, a talent show, a newspaper and a slide show about the school. Third, the student council was given an unusual degree of freedom and responsibility since Ms. Ireland, as its advisor, made a point of developing a very supportive, non authoritarian role. The impact of the student council on children's experiences, Wexler and on their reactions to each other seemed sufficiently great to warrant some relatively detailed analysis.

Ms. Ireland, a black Language Arts teacher, felt that something out of the ordinary needed to be done to improve relations between black and white children.

> Ms. Ireland said she is concerned that the school has not really measured up to its integrated goals. She said that as she understood it, integration and better social relations between blacks and whites was one of the explicit goals which Wexler was set up to foster. In her view, the topic of integration should be dealt with directly in the classroom and the hallways of the school. She was quite outspoken in saying that all areas of the school's educational practice and curriculum should be more direct in stating that the goal of the school is...(for) children to respect each other.
>
> December, 1976

Ms. Ireland was particularly concerned about what she felt was a lack of group feeling and joint identification with the school. So in the late fall of 1976, she and Mr. Court organized the student council to try to foster a sense of belonging and mutual respect.

In a restricted sense, Ms. Ireland takes a colorblind perspective like the other teachers. She argues that group membership should not be a selection

criterion as the following exerpt from our field notes on the first student council meeting suggests.

> Ms. Ireland opens the meeting with a series of statements about the student council. First she tells the students, "We are concerned here only with Team P. We won't allow other kids to be in this. This is just for us." Then she explains that she isn't going to act like a teacher. The students will be on their own in two weeks. She's going to get them started and give them some guidance but within two weeks she expects them to discuss their business, conduct their own meetings, sit where and how they like, etc. (A few minutes of notes deleted). She says, "I want you to understand that Mr. Count and I are here to support you...We'll have disagreements with each other. We'll even talk loudly. That's what goes on in Washington with senators and representatives." Then she asks why a student council is desirable. Steven says, "Making Team B the best." "Excellent," replies Ms. Ireland. She then calls on another boy who says, "Helping Team B." "Very good," says Ms. Ireland. A third child says, "It will be good for solving some of the problems." Another good suggestion," replies Ms. Ireland, "But most of all I want you to have fun...It's important that we have fun together." The kids begin to raise their hands with suggested topics for discussion. A boy raises his hand and says, "Joe has a good idea but he's afraid to say so." Ms. Ireland replies, "Don't be afraid. I'm not your teacher here. Joe suggests hall monitors to take the names of kids who litter...A girl raises the issue of vandalism...There's a long discussion of gypping - cutting in the lunch line ahead of others...Other issues discussed are pushing, shoving and running in the halls. The kids all begin to talk at once about these issues with lots of ideas...(Ten minutes of notes omitted during which Ms. Ireland says the group will have to nominate children to run for various offices on the student council). Nominations start. Kia (white) nominates Sylvia (black) for president. Kevin (black) nominates himself and Karen (white) nominates Kia. Joe (black) nominates Vincent (black). Katy (white) nominates Louise (white) for vice-president. Don (black) nominates Kevin (black). Amy (white) nominates Jennifer (white)...(The nominations for other offices are omitted but follow the same general pattern with children tending to nominate others of their own race and sex). Ms. Ireland then indicates that in the campaign there will be no racial, ethnic or religious themes. She says, "You will not vote for someone because of sex, race or religion nor will kids be allowed to campaign on those bases." The entire team will vote in the elections.
>
> December, 1976

Ms. Ireland reiterates her position that group membership should not be a selection criterion as the Student Council plans it talent show.

> Joe (white) raises his hand and says, "Who's going to be the MC?" Ms. Ireland says, "We need two volunteers. I'll ask for volunteers and then I'll pick two of their names from a hat. Whatever or whoever they are, be it black, white, Protestant, Catholic; Jew, boy or girl, that will be it. Is that okay with everybody?" The children chorus "Yes!" Ms. Ireland says, "Okay, that's very good."
>
> March, 1977

Although Ms. Ireland takes the colorblind perspective in not feeling that race or other group membership is a legitimate basis for selection, she is more likely than most other teachers to feel free to bring up issues which deal with group membership. For example, to my knowledge, she was the only teacher who had a class project relating to the T.V. showing of Roots. Also, she seems more willing to let students see her as a person, and as a person whose group membership can be acknowledged in casual natural ways.

> (The Student Council is discussing the Valentine's Day party they are planning.) Ms. Ireland has now brought up the subject of dancing at the party. She turns to Vincent and says, "Vincent, do you dance?" Vincent blushes and giggles. Ms. Ireland, turning to the class, says, "You can all dance if you want to. I think I'm going to be dancing at this party. I'm going to watch Soul Train a couple of times and get my steps together!" The kids all start giggling and laughing.
>
> February, 1977

The Student Council performs the functions served earlier by the boys' gangs in a number of ways. First, the Student Council clearly serves to help protect students. At the first Student Council meeting, two students, both black boys, were elected as cafeteria monitors to insure that other students in the cafeteria do not push others around or extort money from them. At the second meeting, Ms. Ireland complimented one of these boys, Kevin, about the way he had dealt with a problem in the cafeteria.

Ms. Ireland praised Kevin for the way in which he handled the problem in the cafeteria. She said he had been very polite and courteous and had used the channels that the Student Council had established. She said that Team B children who are accused of breaking rules in the cafeteria will come before the Student Council.

December, 1976

The fact that offenders have to face a large group of peers, the Student Council, seemed to have a noticeable effect as a deterrent to rule breaking. Also, the Student Council decided that children who were consistently "bad" could not participate in some of the special activities, like field trips. Although children were rarely, if ever, actually excluded from activities for bad behavior, Ms. Ireland occasionally highlighted the fact that bad behavior could lead to exclusion from valued activities as shown below.

Donald (black), Vincent (black) and Jeff (white) are having fits of uncontrolled giggles. Ms. Ireland looks over in their direction. She says..."I want you to stop that." She goes on to say, "Donald, I have heard reports that you are misbehaving, that you have been running in the hall...Some students have questioned whether you should be allowed to continue to be vice-president(of the Student Council). Also, some teachers have complained that your grades are declining...Now this is very serious and I think that maybe the Student Council should discuss whether or not you should be penalized for your behavior. Martha, a white girl, raised her hand and is called on. She says, "Ms. Ireland, maybe you should talk to Donald privately so we don't embarrass him here in class. Ms. Ireland says, "I've decided I'm going to do it now but not in a way that will embarrass Donald. She then recounts the behavior people have objected to and says, "Perhaps we should have a vote in class to decide whether or not Donald should continue as vice-president. Because if Donald can't behave like an officer is supposed to and set a good example then maybe he should not be our vice-president. Perhaps it should be the runner-up. She asks the class, "Who was that?" and Beverly says, "It was Jennifer..." Ms. Ireland says, "All right,Donald, we're going to take a vote now. Class, should we put Donald on two weeks' probation as vice-president? How many are in favor of Donald getting two weeks' probation to see if his behavior improves?" The class concurs unanimously. by raising their hands. Ms. Ireland says, "Okay, that's settled... If Donald doesn't get his act together, Jennifer definitely takes over."

February, 1977

Finally, the Student Council got many children involved in various campaigns to keep order and to make the school a better place. For example, the Student Council members worked industriously on making posters urging good behavior which they hung in the hallways and the cafeteria. Also, they set up a suggestion box committee to decide on the placement of such boxes. These boxes were useful because they let children who were worried or fearful about something bring it to the Student Council's attention anonymously.

In addition to helping children feel more secure, as the Mice had done, the Student Council also served a social function much like that which the gangs, especially the Dogs, had. It did this in two primary ways. First, it created a sense of belonging, of having a particular group identity. Second, it organized enjoyable recreational activities. However, the student council had one major advantage over the clubs. It created a sense of belonging and group identity through an institution in which both black and white children participated. Thus, rather than leading to a situation full of the potential for conflict between opposing black and white groups, the Student Council induced the children to work harmoniously to achieve goals which they could not achieve without each other's assistance. This is obviously just the sort of contact which Allport (1954) argued is conducive to improved intergroup relations. In addition, the Student Council sponsored activities, like the talent show and a small newspaper, to which black and white students were able to contribute equally. A few exerpts from the field notes will illustrate these points.

(The students are planning a Valentine's Day party). Ms. Ireland says, "Hmm...We have $14.50 in the treasury. With $14.50 we can't have a very swinging party. How can we raise more money?" A girl says, "We could make sure that everyone has paid their dues " (.25). (Ms. Ireland then talks about a party the previous year). "Last year I dished out hot dogs and ice cream. All I did was lots of work. I'm going to be sure that...I'm going to enjoy myself this year." (The students then try to decide jointly what refreshments to get). Tracy (white) says, "Maybe we could get our mothers to contribute different things?" Ms. Ireland replies, "Well, I know that your mothers would be happy to send things for us to enjoy... but I don't think we should rely on the goodness of mothers. We need to try to figure out ourselves how to handle this." (Lots of discussion of refreshments follows). "Now, we need to decide on a date for the party," says Ms. Ireland. (There is discussion of alternate dates). A vote is taken. It's unanimous for Friday, February 18.

February, 1977

"We have three committees that need to begin work right away," says Ms. Ireland, "so break into groups now and get going." Ms. Ireland and sixteen children stay in the center of the room to plan the talent show. Ms. Ireland says,"Who wants to be in the talent show?" The hands of all sixteen children go up. Ms. Ireland continues, "We need a ditto announcement to sign up people who want to be in on it. I think the first question we should ask is whether the talent show should be for all seventh grade students or only for Team B." There's a unanimous chorus of voices saying, "Only for Team B." A black female says,"Who's going to judge?" Ms. Ireland replies, "Well, we'll have to make the student council the judges or we'll put the names of kids who want to be judges in a box and choose five. Ms. Ireland says, "There is a problem. The whole seventh grade might be too big an audience. They might just laugh and we don't want any of our kids'feelings to be hurt. Maybe it would be better to have just Team B as the audience...If the show goes well we can show it to the whole seventh grade the second time and charge admission." Vincent (black) looks up quietly at her and says, "And split the profits among us." The students all laugh...

March, 1977

The success of the student council in fostering good relations between the students was apparent even to teachers on other teams. Mr. James, the leader of another seventh grade team, refers to Ms. Ireland's success as he tries to characterize the way things went on his team in Wexler's second year as opposed to its first.

> Last year's students were Wexler's first seventh grade class. They (felt that because of this) they had something in common. This year (on our team) there is less of that feeling. Now whether they came into Wexler like that or were disillusioned (once they got here) I don't know. Building up a sense of group feelings (for them) would be a very important deed. Ms. Ireland and another teacher on her team did it. They set up this program. They were sending birthday cards to everybody on the team and...get well cards. They had dues...They planned talent shows and that kind of things. That kind of thing builds loyalty to a group. It's like a team, almost like a group of athletes. Because the black and white (children) belong to the same group, it broke down some of the... resistance.
>
> July, 1977

However, it must be emphasized that although the student council seemed to break down barriers markedly, it was not an overnight panacea for the fears and problems students faced in getting along with one another. The relations between black and white students at the end of Wexler's second year are perhaps best characterized by the words of Sylvia, the black president of the student council who won her position after being nominated by a white friend.

> Interviewer: Some people say that black and white kids in schools like Wexler get to know each other quickly and easily. Others say that this isn't the case. What do you think about this...?
>
> Sylvia: I think they get to know each other fairly quickly... You know they don't want to be afraid. The only way they are not gonna be friends is if they think they are too good to be...Most of the time, they'd be friends... You might not know just everybody...(but) you meet certain people who can be good friends.
>
> May, 1977

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our study of Wexler Middle School suggests that it has seriously attempted to provide an environment which will foster the educational attainment in all children in an atmosphere which respects the potential and individuality of each child. The problems that the school encounters which may inhibit its positive impact on intergroup relations are largely, although not entirely, problems over which it as an institution has little control. Notable among these problems is the gap in academic achievement between the average black and white students entering Wexler. Also important are the somewhat different behavior patterns of the two groups of students and the fears that students bring to their initial encounters.

Because race and social class are so highly correlated in our society due to our long history of racial discrimination the problems that Wexler faces are by no means unusual. The problems may be somewhat more extreme at Wexler because the white students there are quite clearly more academically oriented and intellectually gifted than the average white child.[19] However, the fact that Wexler's student body chose to come to an interracial school suggests that both white and black students were also more likely than their average counterparts to try to find a positive way of dealing with group differences.

Given that the problems Wexler faces are similar to those which will be encountered in many interracial schools, two questions seem to be of paramount importance. First, what is the result of such interracial mixing when serious efforts are made to provide optimal circumstances? Second, what can we learn from both Wexler's accomplishments and its problems about how to achieve an optimal environment for students in interracial schools?

I will not attempt to fully summarize "the effect" of Wexler on its students here. However, a brief recapitulation of some of the study's findings may be helpful. The impact that Wexler had on students and the students' reactions to the school clearly depended on a wide variety of factors including many characteristics which the children brought with them into the school. However, in general both black and white students seemed to feel that the school's academic standards were as high or higher than those of their old schools. Also, they tended to feel students were just about as friendly, if not friendlier,than in their previous schools. Racial isolation was marked when children were allowed to choose their associates. But, when induced or required to work together the students generally did so harmoniously. Relations between black and white students appeared to improve somewhat over time, but the pace of change for many students was glacial. Also, some aspects of the students' intergroup experiences may have been conducive to confirming sterotypes about group differences. There was a marked absence of close friendship between white and black children, even at the end of the school's second year. However, if one accepts both Cohen's (1975) and the teachers' viewpoint that such friendship is of relatively low priority compared to academic achievement and the ability for black and white children to work together productively when need be, this fact does not necessarily call into question Wexler's basic success as an integrated institution.

Although Wexler is beginning to accomplish much of what it set out to accomplish, the question arises of whether there are not some ways in which the school, and others like it, could be even more effective. I would argue that there are several areas which need close attention. First, although

Wexler did make many provisions to meet its special responsibilities as an interracial school, the Wexler experience underlines the problems associated with approaching interracial schooling with even a remanent of the "business as usual" attitude. At one level Wexler planned carefully to create a positive environment for its interracial student body. For example, its staffing policy and its formal classroom assignment policies specifically recognized the importance of providing equal status to blacks and whites. However, the teachers' ideology, which laid such exclusive stress on academics, assumed "natural" improvement of intergroup relations and defined consideration of race as basically illegitimate led most of them to act as much as possible as if Wexler were no different from other schools. Although the school functioned relatively effectively, our research suggests that this ideology did not lead most teachers to adopt special strategies to help either their black or their white students to adapt to a potentially very threatening situation. Indeed, the taboo against racial references almost required that students not approach their teachers about a topic which was clearly of central importance to them. Interestingly, Willie's research suggests that the development of a taboo against anything that suggests racial reference may not be peculiar to Wexler. Willie (1973, p.27) reports the following episode in a newly desegregated elementary school. Unfortunately for our purposes, he takes no special note of the event and does not analyze the extent to which it was an unusual event in the schools studied.

> In this second grade class, reading books were being passed out. The teacher gave instructions to take your dark crayon and underline the correct answer. Finally, after two questions from the children concerning the color of the dark crayon, Miss Z. said, "The black crayon," hesitating before the word "<u>black</u>."

The temptation to avoid racial reference is clear and strong for those who want an interracial school to succeed. Making such reference is risky since it opens up an area which is often personally sensitive as well as politically volatile. Although completely avoiding such reference may be a safe strategy in the short run, it also means that important problems are ignored. In suggesting that the taboo against racial reference is dysfunctional, I do not mean to imply that the school should in any way try to operate as a giant t-group in which individuals constantly discuss their most personal feelings and beliefs about race. Rather, I would merely suggest that the fact of the school's interracial nature be openly discussed and seriously considered in evaluating the effectiveness of various policies and practices. For example, little or no attention was given to the fact that black students are suspended in numbers greatly out of proportion to their numbers in the school. Although this fact may not in and of itself be proof of racial discrimination, it does suggest that school disciplinary policies and practices should at least be examined. Such examination might point out rules which are not essential and which may be at variance with the sub-cultural norms of certain groups of students. For example, Forehand and Ragosta (1976) tell of a conflict in a high school over a dress code which prohibited hats indoors. Black male students argued that this prohibition was essentially arbitrary and discriminated against them by outlawing a practice common in their culture.

One real problem at Wexler is the conflict which teachers often perceive between academic and social goals. In their attempt to maximize the students' academic achievement, teachers often institute practices, such as strict ability grouping, which appear to have very negative effects on

on intergroup relations. Although there are probably numerous situations in which trade-offs between academic and social goals must be made, it is also important to search for creative ways of structuring school experiences which will increase the attainment of the social goals without in any way undermining the achelvement of academic goals. A new and fast growing body of research suggests that the use of cooperative work groups in the classroom is one such strategy which can both improve intergroup relations and produce as much or even more academic progress than more traditional classroom structures (Aronson, Blaney, Sikes, Stephan & Snapp, 1975; DeVries, 1977; Devries, & Edwards, 1974; Johnson & Johnson, 1975; Slavin, 1977). Aronson et al report that,once introduced to the idea, teachers often tend to react quite positively to this sort of classroom arrangement. Slavin (1977) and his colleagues have made considerable progress in developing cooperative strategies which are easily put into effect in interracial classrooms and which have positive academic as well as social effects. Further work on developing a variety of cooperative strategies is important so that a wide variety of such techniques will be available. Also, interracial schools need to provide teachers with mechanisms for learning about such strategies and with encouragement and support as such strategies are initially adopted.

In summary, Wexler's goal, as stated on the bulletin board by the front office is to be the "finest school." Attainment of such excellence is not an easy process, especially when the school is attempting to serve two groups of students who have had very different backgrounds and who belong to traditionally isolated and even hostile groups. Wexler serves as a model to other schools which also wish to pursue excellence as academic and social

on intergroup relations. Although there are probably numerous situations in which trade-offs between academic and social goals must be made, it is also important to search for creative ways of structuring school experiences which will increase the attainment of the social goals without in any way undermining the achelvement of academic goals. A new and fast growing body of research suggests that the use of cooperative work groups in the classroom is one such strategy which can both improve intergroup relations and produce as much or even more academic progress than more traditional classroom structures (Aronson, Blaney, Sikes, Stephan & Snapp, 1975; DeVries, 1977; Devries, & Edwards, 1974; Johnson & Johnson, 1975; Slavin, 1977). Aronson et al report that,once introduced to the idea, teachers often tend to react quite positively to this sort of classroom arrangement. Slavin (1977) and his colleagues have made considerable progress in developing cooperative strategies which are easily put into effect in interracial classrooms and which have positive academic as well as social effects. Further work on developing a variety of cooperative strategies is important so that a wide variety of such techniques will be available. Also, interracial schools need to provide teachers with mechanisms for learning about such strategies and with encouragement and support as such strategies are initially adopted.

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institutions. It serves as a model in two distinct ways. First, its accomplishments suggest that with planning and effort, viable, indeed thriving, interracial schools can be established. Second, the problems that Wexler has faced suggest the need for clear recognition of the special challenges posed by interracial schools and for a continuing search for effective ways to meet these challenges.

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Footnotes

1. See "Field Studies in Urban Desegregated Schools," Request for Proposal (NIE-R-75-0023), National Institute of Education, May 7, 1975, p.4.

2. As blacks come less and less to idealize whites and to denigrate blacks this added incentive value of white approval compared to black approval should disappear. Hence, while the social facilitation effect may help increase black achievement in desegregated settings now, ultimately one would expect that it will cease to operate.

3. This count does not include the classic Yarrow, Campbell and Yarrow (1958) study which was conducted in a desegregated camp.

4. To protect confidentiality pseudonyms have been used throughout this report for the school studied, the city in which it is located, and all school personnel. Also, occasionally very minor changes of fact have been made solely to assist in protecting confidentiality. For example, areas said to be to the north of the school may actually be east or south.

5. Robert Crain. The politics of school desegregation. Chicago: Aldine, 1968.

6. Waterford News, February 1, 1975.

7. For a brief summary of much of the evidence on resegregation see "Resegregation: A second generation school desegregation issue." Unpublished position paper, National Institute of Education.

8. Waterford News, December 18, 1974.

9. I have no official verification of this statement from school authorities. However, I have been told this is the case by both teachers and students. Also, it was clear from class lists I was able to inspect which included information on the level at which students were reading that some of the black children selected for the scholars' program had scores somewhat lower than any of the white children who had been selected for that program.

10. One teacher did refuse access to his class for the first three weeks of school saying that he wanted to get authority

relations clear before another adult was introduced into the classroom. Another teacher, in the sixth grade, was sufficiently unenthusiastic about our continuing observation of her class for a second year that we decided not to persist.

11. The mother's reason for her refusal was that her son's grandfather had died just the week before and that the child was quite upset about it.

12. There were only two instances during the entire first year when an observer felt compelled to step in and interfere in fights. Neither of these incidents involved children in the four classrooms which were regularly observed. Only one such incident, also involving children not known to the research team, occurred in the second year.

13. In our analysis of field notes fights were distinguished from boxing in play as well as from hitting or punching. Criteria used in distinguishing fights from these other were: 1) intensity, 2) duration, 3) expression of negative emotion, and 4) mutuality of the activity. Incidents classified as fights were almost without exception high in all of these characteristics.

14. During the first three months of school one quarter of the lunch tables were randomly sampled and mapped three times each week. Unfortunately using a one-quarter sample resulted in a great deal of variance. Because of this problem the procedure was changed so that after the strike a full sample was taken once each week. This procedure reduced the variance a great deal. It is possible that trends occurring in the first months of school were obscured by the relatively great variance. However inspection of the means aggregated into monthly and weekly averages suggests that this most probably is not the case.

15. ESAA is, of course, an act designed specifically to assist desegregated schools in handling the special social and educational problems and challenges they face.

16. In the study's first year, white students were interviewed by the principal investigator, a white female. Black students were interviewed by a black woman of approximately the same age as the principal investigator. The black interviewer is certified as a school psychologist. However, she has never worked at Wexler or with any of the children who now attend Wexler in her role as a school psychologist. In the second year, some interviewing was done by both black and white graduate students.

17. In discussing the quantification of data obtained from field notes, Smith and Geoffrey (1968) pose what they call the "two-realities" problem. "When the observer goes into the field, he perceives a reality--the flux...Eventually... the observer leaves the field and has his notes typed into multiple copies so that analysis might proceed easily. These notes become now a second reality. For most field workers they are the basis for analysis... The more recent attempts...to quantify participant observer data rest on twin assumptions: first, that everything in the notes, the second reality, represents events in the first reality, the real flux; and second, that the proportion of events to one another in the notes is a total sample or contains proportionality with the real world. We would contend that these are separate assumptions and important for the kind of analysis possible." (p.255).

Smith and Geoffrey's comments are well taken. It seems likely that certain types of events, being more eye-catching or dramatic than others, are more likely to be recorded than others. Hence, quantitative statements based on written field notes can be misleading. The accuracy of statements like that made here in the text and later depends on whether observers recorded the classes of behavior discussed with substantially differential proportionality to their actual occurrence for black and white children, or with differential proportionality in intraracial and interracial interaction. It is certainly possible that unintended bias could predispose the observer to record behavior disproportionality to its real frequency of occurrence. The fact that the notes of each of the several observers show substantially the same pattern suggests that observer bias does not explain the patterns found. However, it is of course possible, though perhaps unlikely, that all the observers are similarly biased. Hence, the statements in the text and the figures in Table 8 should not be taken as precise estimates.

18. The comments made above in footnote 17 are also relevant here.

19. We do not have actual figures on the average tested IQ's of Wexler's students but the unusual academic prowess of the white students in particular has been demonstrated in a wide variety of ways. Two examples should illustrate this. First, Wexler's team in the city wide "Junior High Quiz" competition reached the final round, handily defeating all opponents. It lost the final round by a narrow margin. Second, Wexler contributes as many students to the accelerated academic program in the eighth grade as do several other middle schools of similar size combined. The students are selected on the basis of grades and tested IQ's exceeding 130. The very large majority of the Wexler students in the scholar's program are white as reported earlier.

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